

Israel launches air raid on south Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — Israeli warplanes bombed south Lebanon on Saturday after an attack against an army position by Hizbollah activists. Lebanese police said, but there were no immediate reports of injuries. Three missiles were fired on a valley near the Israeli position of Sojod in the central sector of the buffer zone occupied by the Jewish state in south Lebanon, they said. The Islamist movement Hizbollah earlier claimed it attacked an Israeli convoy near Sojod and caused several casualties, but there was no immediate independent confirmation.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Russia to help upgrade Syria's defensive weapons

DAMASCUS (R) — Russia's defence minister told his Syrian counterpart on Saturday that Moscow was ready to improve Syria's defensive weapons. Russia's Marshal Igor Sergeyev held talks with Syria's Lieutenant-General Mustafa Tlass in a meeting in Damascus also attended by senior general from the two sides, including Lieutenant-General Ali Asslan, chief of staff of the Syrian army, a Syrian official said. "Marshal Sergeyev stressed during the talks the interest to maintain the deep-rooted cooperation between the Syrian and the Russian armies and to improve the defensive capabilities of the friendly Syrian army," the official said. The Syrian army is largely equipped with Soviet-made weapons supplied before 1991 when the Soviet Union broke into independent states led by Russia.

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Regent leads Kingdom's celebrations of King's birthday



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, greets people who crowded Amman Stadium on Saturday to attend the main celebration of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday led the Jordanian people's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday through a major address he delivered at a public festival at Amman's Sports City.

Prince Hassan told tens of thousands of citizens gathered at the soccer stadium that through relentless efforts and following on the footsteps of the founder of the Kingdom, King Hussein has enabled the Jordanian people to attain major achievements.

Ever since he assumed his constitutional powers, King Hussein spared no moment to help his country and his people attain prosperity, the Regent said.

The King is father and brother to all Jordanians working with them hand-in-hand at all circumstances at home, in Palestine, the Arab World and at all international levels, added Prince Hassan.

The Regent recalled the King's endeavours to build schools, hospitals, social services, a national industry, modern agriculture and the principles and foundation for political pluralism and democracy.

Jordanians owe their modern country and its various achievements to King Hussein who worked hard in the face of adversities and hardships and despite the turmoil at the regional and international levels to ensure major progress for his people, the Regent pointed out.

Prince Hassan said that the King has spared no effort towards building the Jordanian Armed Forces and the security services that serve as a shield protecting the interests of the country and the Arab Nation.

The Regent expressed his good wishes and those of the Jordanian people to the King saying that the people of Jordan yearn for his return sending him love and praying to God that their Monarch will be completely cured from his illness.

Accompanied by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and senior officials, the Regent



Jordanians took to the streets on Saturday to celebrate His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday (Photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

watched a major festival in which thousands of students took part. The festival included folklore performances, procession of vehicles adorned with flowers, and marchers carrying the King's portraits and singing national songs.

Prince Hassan later met the participants in the festival as the Armed Forces army played national tunes.

Attending the festival were the prime minister, speakers of Parliament, ministers, senior army officers, prominent per-

sonalities, members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic missions, representatives of unions, political parties and tens of thousands of Jordanian citizens.

Later Prince Hassan met representatives of the Jordanian badiat at the Palace of Culture and said the country's leadership is concerned with the development of their region.

He said that a decision has been taken to establish what will come to be known as the Badiat Region Authority to take charge

of the region's development, improving living conditions and introducing and expanding social, cultural and economic facilities for the tribes.

The Regent urged Jordanians to unify their ranks and work in concert for the development of their country.

Attending the meeting were HRH Prince Abdullah, HRH Prince Ghazi, Prince Zeid Ben Shaker and Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh (see related stories on page 3).

Iraq backs down over U.N. inspections, likely averts attack

BAGHDAD (AP) — Faced with the threat of an American attack, Iraq declared Saturday that U.N. weapons inspectors could go back to work immediately, a move that could defuse the third crisis in less than a year over arms inspections.

Iraq insisted that the threat was not a factor, saying in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan that "we offer this chance not out of fear of the aggressive American campaign."

Instead, the letter from Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz repeated Iraq's goal that renewed cooperation would "give a further chance to achieve justice by lifting sanctions" imposed on Iraq in 1990 after its invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. President Clinton's national security team met Saturday in Washington to assess the Iraqi promise, and the U.N. Security Council prepared to meet to decide whether Iraq's stand meets its demands for unconditionally allowing the inspectors to work.

Aziz's letter Saturday tapped a flurry of diplomatic activity over 24 hours — a meeting between Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the Russian ambassador to Baghdad, public statements by Saddam and Clinton and crucial letters from Amman and Aziz. In the end, it may have been Amman's personality at the centre of Iraq's reversal. Aziz's letter repeatedly referred to Iraq's trust in the secretary-general and his "good faith and sincerity."

It was Amman who had defused the previous crisis in February when Iraq blocked the inspectors — who are responsible for searching for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction — from visiting Saddam's palaces. Aziz's message to Amman, however, may still pose a problem.

U.N. special envoy Prakash Shah earlier told a news conference in Baghdad that Aziz's letter put no conditions on the return to Baghdad of the inspectors, who left Iraq on Wednesday.

But a two-page annex reiterated Iraq's previous terms for a comprehensive review of its compliance with U.N. resolutions. It wasn't clear whether the Security Council and the United States would interpret the annex as Baghdad's hopes — or its demands.

In the letter, Aziz urged Amman to ensure that a comprehensive review would include the points in the annex, which he said "will render the review serious, fair and fruitful."

The annex says the comprehensive review be carried out within a short time, "seven days for example." In some cases, Iraq's positions are watered-down versions of past demands.

For example, its insistence that UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler be fired is reduced to saying Butler and the structure of UNSCOM are "important matters" and Iraq hopes the Security Council will discuss them seriously and "as soon as possible."

Iraq said the points in the annex had been presented in a meeting Friday with the ambassadors of Russia, France and China — the three members of the Security Council that have endorsed an easing of sanctions.

The Americans and British are the other permanent members, and they have been uncompromising in insisting on no easing of the sanctions unless Iraq fulfills requirements to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction.

The Security Council has said they will not be lifted until U.N. inspectors certify that all such weapons have been destroyed. Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations said inspectors

Israel, Palestine welcome signs of end to Gulf crisis

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab League Saturday welcomed signs that a possible military strike against Iraq over United Nations weapons inspections had been averted.

For Israel, any attack against Iraq could have resulted in a retaliatory attack by Iraq on the Jewish state, as was the case in the 1991 Gulf war. The Palestinians feared that the Mideast peace process would suffer in the wake of a United States strike on a fellow Arab Nation.

"We are very happy that the crisis has ended in a peaceful way," said senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had urged the United States to exhaust diplomatic efforts and avoid military action.

Palestinians feared that wide-spread popular support for Saddam Hussein in the event of U.S. military action, could put Arafat in a difficult position with the United States, the sponsor of Mideast peace.

In the West Bank city of Jenin Saturday, some 200 Palestinians held a support rally for Iraq. Carrying Iraqi flags, the crowds shouted "Saddam, destroy Tel Aviv!" It was the first such show of street support for Iraq since the current crisis began.

"We were apprehensive that it may have a negative impact on the peace process and the implementation of the (peace) agreement," Erekat said. Erekat called on the U.N. to lift

seven years of sanctions on Iraq. Israel had tried to stay out of the current crisis but urged the U.N. not to back-down over weapons inspections.

"We welcome any resolution of the conflict without bloodshed," said David Bar-Ilan, senior adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Since Thursday the Israeli army has been distributing gas masks to civilians as a precaution against a possible non-conventional weapons attack by Iraq. Israeli TVs said gas mask centres would open again Sunday.

During the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles with conventional warheads into Israeli cities.

Bar-Ilan hoped the U.N. inspectors would be able to prevent Saddam Hussein from acquiring ballistic missiles with non-conventional warheads.

"We hope that the inspection will proceed, so that the region will be safe from non-conventional weapons and the means of their delivery," he told the Associated Press.

In Cairo, the secretary general of the Arab League, Esmat Abdul Meguid, praised Iraq's move to resume cooperation with weapons inspectors as "an important step to defuse tension in the region and open the way for a diplomatic solution to contain the crisis." His comments were carried by Egypt's official Middle East News Agency.

Standoff. Still, Iraq once again brought attention to the U.N. sanctions, which limit the sale of oil, have devastated Iraq's economy and made its 22 million people dependent on a U.N. relief programme. Their end has long been the government's priority.

Saturday's decision ended a week that witnessed what seemed to be preparations for an imminent attack. A total of 103 U.N. inspectors were withdrawn to Bahrain amid fears of a U.S. weapons strike. And about one-third of 450 U.N. humanitarian workers were evacuated to the Amman.

Russia, China and France, as well, were less vocal this time, although Iraq credited their diplomacy for ending the

Ross urges Israelis, Palestinians to begin implementing accord

NABLUS (AP) — After a two-hour meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, the U.S. peace envoy to the Middle East, called on both Israel and the Palestinians Saturday to begin implementing the latest peace accord which is more than a week behind schedule.

Dennis Ross, who arrived in the region Friday, spoke after talks with Arafat in the northern West Bank city of Nablus.

Under the accord, Israel is to begin a staged troop withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank Monday. However, because of several delays in getting the agreement ratified through the Israeli cabinet, Israeli officials have said the pullback will likely begin towards the end of next week.

"Our objective is to have the agreement implemented. Both sides have obligations and responsibilities and we expect both sides to carry out those responsibilities and obligations," Ross told reporters after the meeting.

Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said Palestinians also wanted to see Israel implement several other areas of the agreement also a week behind schedule including the opening of the Palestinian airport in Gaza, and the release of prisoners from Israeli jails.

Erekat said the Palestinians discussed their grievances with Ross over Israeli plans for a new Jewish housing project on

a disputed Jerusalem hilltop and the confiscation of West Bank land for new roads for Jewish settlers.

"The American side understands that the parties should refrain from any unilateral action," Erekat said in regards to the building.

Israel's government confirmed Friday that it has authorised the paving of 13 roads to Jewish settlements in the West Bank, including one that will reportedly require the expropriation of thousands of acres of Palestinian-owned land.

"Such actions create an atmosphere that will not be encouraging for the peace process and are a direct provocation to the Palestinians," said Nabil Amr, an adviser to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Ross met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Friday and again on Saturday.

Netanyahu said last week he would permit the opening of the Palestinian airport and begin releasing prisoners, though he has not set dates.

Moving a small step forward, Israel on Friday gave the Palestinians the names of Israeli negotiators in various committees that are to deal with implementation of the accord or finalise some issues, such as the opening of a Palestinian harbour.

Erekat was to meet with Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh Sunday to dis-

cuss the committees.

Meanwhile, Palestinians held rallies and military parades in Nablus and the West Bank city of Ramallah Saturday to commemorate ten years since the PLO first announced it was seeking Palestinian independence. At the Ramallah rally, a group of Palestinians burned Israeli and American flags to protest against the latest Mideast peace accord.

In a speech to supporters before meeting Ross in Nablus, Arafat suggested that he was still aiming to declare a Palestinian state in May, when the current peace accord expires.

"We are going to build our state with Jerusalem as its capital. Centimetre by centimetre, we will get the land to build our state for May 1999," the Palestinian leader said.

Netanyahu is opposed to Palestinian statehood and said that if Arafat unilaterally declares independence in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel will annex the large chunks of land there still under its control.

In a press statement, Netanyahu's spokesman Aviv Bushinsky said Arafat's comments Saturday were harmful to the spirit of the new peace deal.

"Continuation of statements of this kind place the Oslo agreement in general and the Wye agreement in particular in doubt," the statement read.

Palestinians want U.N. intervention

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Palestinian U.N. observer called on U.N. bodies on Friday to prevent Israel from carrying out plans to build on the outskirts of Arab east Jerusalem and in the West Bank, saying this was enough to reconvene an emergency special session of the General Assembly.

In a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan, Nasser Al Kidwa did not specifically request another ses-

sion of the special session, first summoned in April 1997 and resumed three times since then.

He referred to a tender that Israel issued on Thursday for the construction of more than 1,000 settlement units on a hill south of Jerusalem, called Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arabic and Har Homa in Hebrew, that Israel has occupied since the 1967 Middle East war.

Al Kidwa said Israel had also decided to "pave 13

new so-called bypass roads in the West Bank to service the illegal Jewish settlements," which he said would require additional confiscation of land.

"Both of these decisions are totally unacceptable and represent dangerous developments," he said.

They grossly violated the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war and numerous Security Council resolutions, he said.

Saudi will not let U.S. forces launch Iraq attack from its territory

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia will not allow U.S. forces to use its territory to launch attacks on Iraq even as the kingdom's forces were put on alert, Saudi and Western officials said Saturday.

"Saudi Arabia will not grant military facilities to American forces or others if there is an attack against Iraq, and no attack will be launched from its territory," a Saudi official told AFP.

The official, who requested anonymity, said the United States "understands the Saudi position," without saying whether or not it had asked for the use of Saudi territory to launch attacks.

The U.S., French and British air forces based in

the kingdom to maintain the no-fly zone in southern Iraq will "continue their routine operations" if there is an attack on Baghdad, the official said.

But "these forces will only continue their surveillance operations, in line with their mission," he added.

The aircraft charged with maintaining the no-fly zone imposed on southern Iraq in 1992 to protect the region's Shiite Muslims from Iraqi attack, are stationed at the Prince Sultan airbase south of Riyadh.

Meanwhile, a Riyadh-based western military source told AFP Saudi troops are on a level three alert, with the highest being level one, and all leave has

been cancelled for ground, air and sea forces.

Saudi Arabia, which borders Iraq, was part of the U.S.-led international coalition that ejected Iraqi forces from Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf war.

But in the latest stand-off, the kingdom has called for a diplomatic solution. During the last crisis in February, Saudi Arabia refused to allow its territory to be used as a base for attacks on Baghdad.

Tension has mounted since Oct. 31 when Iraq halted all cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors and demanded an end to the U.N. sanctions imposed following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraqi letter allowing resumption of UNSCOM weapons inspections

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Here is a full unofficial translation of the letter given to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan allowing U.N. weapons inspections to resume in full in Iraq without conditions.

The letter, signed by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, followed a meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council and the National Command of the ruling Baath Party chaired by President Saddam Hussein.

Resolution 687, which represents the declared objective of the comprehensive review according to your proposal. It is well known that the main reason for that was the American position, which does not represent the prevailing opinion of the Council. That position, contrary to your initiative, objected continuously to the presentation of any clarity in regard to the objective of the comprehensive review.

3. Despite assurances that we have received from you and from many members of the Council that supported the main objective of the comprehensive review, and despite the confidence we have in you and in the majority of the Council members and our belief in your good faith and sincerity, those assurances were not satisfactory because they did not meet the basics from our point of view.

On the basis of what was stated in your letter, and in appreciation of the content of the letter of President Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian Federation and Yevgeny Primakov, the prime minister of the Russian Federation, and the positive positions expressed and conveyed to us by China, France, Brazil and other states and in order to give a further chance to achieve justice by lifting sanctions commencing with the implementation of paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, the leadership of Iraq decided

to resume working with UNSCOM and the IAEA and to allow them to perform their normal duties in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and on the basis of the principles which were agreed upon in the memorandum of understanding signed with you on 23 Feb. 1998.

We offer this chance not out of fear of the aggressive American campaign and the threat to commit a new aggression against Iraq, but as an expression of our feeling of responsibility, and in response to your appeal and those of our friends. We affirm that the people of Iraq would not relinquish their legitimate right in having the iniquitous embargo lifted and to live normally like other nations of the world. We will be looking forward to seeing the outcome of your efforts and the review.

Excellency, we rightly believe that if the comprehensive review were not to be a mere formality and to be free from the influences of tendentious purposes, the adoption of the points we conveyed yesterday, 13/11/1998, to the ambassadors of Russia, France and China, a copy of which I enclose herewith, will render the review serious, fair and fruitful.

We expect that you will continue with your efforts to lay down the bases and the correct procedures for the review, so as to commence as soon as possible.



DFLP, PFLP SUPPORTERS MARK ALGIERS DECLARATION ANNIVERSARY: Palestinian supporters of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Saturday burn pictures of U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during a rally in the West Bank town of Ramallah. The rally was staged to mark the 10th anniversary of the Algiers Declaration, in which all major Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) factions unilaterally declared "the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with its capital at Jerusalem" (AFP photo)

Organisation urges Annan to intervene in Iraq crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — In a message sent today to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, the president of the International Progress Organisation (IPO), Hans Koechler, urged Annan to intervene in the present crisis between Iraq and the United States and to undertake an urgent peace mission similar to the one he undertook earlier this year, according to an IPO statement.

In his message, Koechler stated that the relevant Security Council resolutions not at

all authorise the use of force against Iraq. Any unilateral action by the United States or the United Kingdom will be strictly illegal and in violation of the basic rules of the U.N. Charter, the statement said.

Koechler stated that the comprehensive sanctions regime, now in its eighth year, constitutes a crime against humanity for which the holders of executive power in the countries enforcing the sanctions are fully responsible. The highly politicised inspections

regime of UNSCOM has regrettably served to prolong the sanctions indefinitely, he said, adding that it is "totally unacceptable" that the people of Iraq be victimised for the purposes of power politics.

In his message to Annan, Koechler referred to recent reports according to which the United Nations weapons monitoring regime in Iraq has been used, to a considerable extent, for the purposes of intelligence gathering on behalf of powerful member states of the United Nations.

As reported by Brian Jenkins Wednesday night on the CNBC news show, UNSCOM inspectors have indeed been providing intelligence information, including targeting information, to the U.S. government. These illegal practices have completely destroyed the credibility of the United Nations organisation as an impartial international agency committed to the rule of law and to the preservation of peace, the statement added.

In a separate statement, the

IPO president deplored the lack of resolve on the part of the official Arab World to defend its sovereignty vis-à-vis outside aggression. The "paralysis" of the Arab League when it comes to the protection of the sovereign rights of one of its founding members, the Republic of Iraq, and the rights of the Iraqi people to live in peace and dignity is a drastic sign of the degradation of pan-Arab politics in recent years, he said.

Egypt accuses Israel of breaking Wye commitments

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak accused Israel Saturday of breaking its commitments under last month's Wye River peace agreement with the Palestinians before the ink had even dried.

"Israel has taken several measures which run counter to its commitments in the accord before the ink has even dried," Mubarak said in a

speech to mark the official opening of the Egyptian parliament.

He singled out among Israel's "very serious" actions its continued expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

"This unjustified behaviour risks aborting U.S. efforts" to relaunch the peace process, the Egyptian president said.

Mubarak called for "an active role by the United States in the implementation of the accord."

Under the Wye agreement, Israel agreed to halt "unilateral actions" which the Palestinians consider to mean any expansion of settlements in the occupied areas.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insists that

the term refers only to the creation of new settlements and not the expansion of existing Jewish enclaves.

U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross arrived in the region Friday to oversee the agreement's implementation. He met Netanyahu later Friday and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Saturday.

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12:05Pink Panther
12:25Pamela Patch
12:40Animated Classic
13:30Discover Magazine
14:00Feature Film - "Behind The Waterfall"
15:30The Adventure of Black Stallion
16:00Big Cat
16:30Vid Kids
18:00French Programme - "Le Grand Secret"
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programme
19:30News Headlines
19:33Britas Empire
20:00A Frique
20:30Renegade
21:15Forming and Ecology
21:30Behind the Scenes
22:00News in English
22:30Feature Film - "The Message"

PRAYER TIMES

04:39Fair
05:59(Sunrise) Doha
11:20Dhuhr
14:16Asr
16:41Maghreb
18:01Isha

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Blood Bank4775121
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Radio Jordan4744111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority5815615
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Radio Jordan4744111
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J. Electricity Authority5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
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AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic Abdi5661317
Husseini Medical Centre5858856
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity4642816
Akaleh Maternity4642412
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
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Shmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607530
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Zarqa National Hospital091900560
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Al Hikma Modern Hospital091990990
IRBID:
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Ibn Al Nafes Hospital0217101372, 0217103101

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Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:25Bombay (RJ)
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
08:50Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:00Beirut (RJ)
09:50Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
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17:45London (RJ)
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20:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
20:15Vienna (RJ)
20:35Rome (RJ)
20:40Frankfurt (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:20Beirut (RJ)
08:00Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
09:00Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
09:30Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:10Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:00Athens, Rome (RJ)

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09:00Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
09:30Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:10Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:00Athens, Rome (RJ)

ARRIVALS

11:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15Athens (RJ)
13:00Aqaba, Brussels (add) (RJ)
20:00Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:15New Delhi (RJ)
22:30Bangkok (RJ)
22:45Sanaa (RJ)
22:50Cairo (RJ)
23:50Damascus (RJ)
00:10Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Other Flights
07:25Frankfurt (LH)
07:25Damascus, London (BA)
07:25Paris (AF)
08:55Abu Dhabi, Dubai (EK)
12:00Jeddah (SV)
13:20Doha (QF)
13:30Moscow (SU)
15:35Doha (QR)
20:00Beirut (ME)
21:15Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40Cairo (MS)
02:15Amsterdam (KL)
04:45Alexandria (BA)

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Aqaba marks with water sk

Abdullah — The port of Aqaba Sunday celebrated its 10th anniversary with a show of water skiing. Water skiers from 12 American Aqaba las form at th Firewor held from last early

NEWS IN BR

receives birthday message

Abdullah — His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan received a birthday message from his son, Prince Abdullah, on his 30th birthday. The message was sent by the King's son, Prince Abdullah, who is the Crown Prince of Jordan. The King's son, Prince Abdullah, is the Crown Prince of Jordan. The King's son, Prince Abdullah, is the Crown Prince of Jordan.

Abdullah opens sports c

Abdullah — Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, who is the Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan, opened a sports center in Aqaba. The sports center is located in Aqaba and is the largest sports center in Jordan. The sports center is located in Aqaba and is the largest sports center in Jordan.

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Abdullah — Prime Minister Fayez I. Tayeh inaugurated a new street in Amman. The new street is located in Amman and is the longest street in Amman. The new street is located in Amman and is the longest street in Amman.

hurt in Jakarta

Abdullah — All Jordanians in Jakarta were hurt during the recent earthquake. The earthquake was a 6.5 magnitude quake that struck the city of Jakarta. The earthquake was a 6.5 magnitude quake that struck the city of Jakarta.

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Abdullah — The Jordanian government is going to launch a new project. The project is a new project that is being launched by the Jordanian government. The project is a new project that is being launched by the Jordanian government.

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Royal family, ministers wish King a happy 63rd birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Local newspapers yesterday were filled with announcements wishing His Majesty King Hussein a happy 63rd birthday and supplements on the King's life and reactions to the occasion.

Members of the Royal Family also expressed their happiness at the King's recovery and wished him a happy birthday and a safe return.

In his message to the King, HRH Prince Abdullah said: "Your birthday is Jordan's birthday. You have been the example we follow. May God keep you, and hopefully we will meet soon in your own country."

HRH Prince Faisal said: "King Hussein is the father of all Jordanians. His sons must do their utmost to serve the nation and the country. We miss you very much and look forward to being reunited with you, hopefully here in Amman."

"On the occasion of the King's birthday, we remember how leaders' celebrations are observed nationwide. This opportunity reminds us of the King's

accomplishment in creating the country that Jordan is today," said HRH Prince Rashid. "The King has been facing battles with a big heart and a strong will. He will come back with the confidence and love of his people. I pray to God to keep him well."

In an account of the King's journey to the United States in July for treatment at the Mayo Clinic, HRH Princess Haya said: "When we boarded the plane heading to the United States, we thought it was a simple fever [affecting the King]. Because my father is a strong man, he was able to hide his agony, and none of us realised how much he was silently suffering."

"The first time I realised that his condition was serious was on the plane. He told me he felt feverish throughout his entire body. When I looked at him, I thought he was all right but when I put my hand to his forehead, I felt the heat. He was sweating, then he was shivering, but despite the pain, he was smiling and said, 'Don't worry.' Few of

us realised the pain he was in."

HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid said: "We mark the King's birthday with happiness and pray to God to keep him strong and bring him back to his home safely. We are all indebted to the King for the 46 years of service dedicated to the country. Under the King's leadership, the country, in a short period of time, was able to build its reputation internationally."

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Samih Bino said: "This moment is dear to all Muslims, Arabs and Jordanians, and reaffirms the fact that an honest leader, who governs by love, not force, makes a personal celebration a national event. The King presented his life as a gift to the country and the nation."

Al Ra'i columnist Fahed Faneh commented that the best gift the King gave to Jordan was peace. "The improvements Jordan has made, whether on the political, economic or social levels, during the King's era are miracles in themselves," said Faneh.

Jordan marks King's birthday with car processions, banners and marches

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Thousands of Jordanians took to the streets yesterday in a nationwide celebration to mark His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday.

Processions of cars bearing Jordanian flags and portraits of the King filled the capital's thoroughfares. Parades and fireworks displays were staged across the Kingdom in streets decorated with banners with birthday wishes for the King.

"Happy birthday to our King, we miss you," said one of hundreds of banners hung from lamp-posts in Amman.

"We wish you a safe return, our father, father of all Jordanians," said another.

People from all walks of life marched through the streets of Amman on foot singing patriotic songs and chanting good wishes to the Monarch.

"We sacrifice our soul, our blood, for you Hussein," shouted a group of young Jordanians while carrying the national flag and marching towards Sports City.

"This day is closer to my heart than any other day in the year," one old man wearing a kaffiyeh (traditional headress) told the Jordan Times.

The government announced a two-day national holiday to mark the occasion, which includes fireworks, folklore dances and a skiing competition in Aqaba.

A huge birthday letter has been carried around the country to gather a million signatures — nearly a quarter of the population.



Soldiers Saturday celebrate the 63rd birthday of His Majesty King Hussein in Amman. Jordanians began a long weekend of festivities to celebrate the birthday of the Monarch, who has been away from home since mid-July (AFP photo)

Aqaba marks King's birthday with water skiing, fireworks

AMMAN (J.T.) — The port city of Aqaba Saturday celebrated His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday with waterskiing events, national dabkeh dances and cultural activities.

Nearly 1,000 citizens took part in a candle procession through the city streets that passed near the home of Al Hussein Ben Ali, leader of the Great Arab Revolt.

In the hotel district, an international skiing group put on a show while several gliders flew above.

Water skier Chad Thompson from the U.S. travelled with 12 other professional American water skiers to Aqaba last Wednesday to perform at the event.

Fireworks displays were held from Friday evening until early Saturday morning.

The Department of Tourism organised a celebration which included poetry recitals, national songs and Jordanian folklore dances.

Similar performances were held at local clubs, and the Department of Tourism organised an exhibition of embroideries and ceramics as well as paintings of the Aqaba fort as a contribution to the city's celebrations.

portraits of King Hussein and Jordanian flags.

Cars honked, jet fighters circled the city and military helicopters hovered overhead carrying banners of good wishes. In the brisk streets of downtown Amman, shopkeepers were offering passers-by free sweets and soft drinks.

"Everybody is happy today. The police patrols

were unusually forgiving today. I managed to get away with a traffic violation," said one taxi driver near the University of Jordan.

The King's birthday this year is considered especially important for Jordanians after being reassured about his health the previous night in a telephone interview with Jordan Television.

occasion to express my gratitude to the King for his efforts to bring Jordan to what it is today," said one caller.

The King's birthday this year is considered especially important for Jordanians after being reassured about his health the previous night in a telephone interview with Jordan Television.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives birthday messages

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday received messages of congratulations on his 63rd birthday from King Hassan II of Morocco, Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifah Al Thani, Bahraini Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifah Ben Salman Al Khalifah, Spain's King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, and Great Britain's Prince Charles. The president of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Ahmad Qurei, also congratulated the King on the occasion and said the Palestinians share the happiness of Jordanians on the King's birthday.

Prince Abdullah opens sports complex

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, HRH Prince Abdullah on Saturday opened the Prince Abdullah Sports City in Qweismeh. The 11,000-square-metre sports complex consists of a stadium, meeting rooms, a media room, parking lot and a 400-square-metre library. Swimming pools, an athletics track and a park will be included later in the JD7.78 million complex, which can seat 21,000 people. The event is one of many marking His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday.

Tarawneh inaugurates new street

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh on Saturday inaugurated Al Urdun Street and Independence Plaza as part of the country's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday. The prime minister, who deputised at the ceremony for HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, cut the tape at the end of the street, which links the heart of the city with the University of Jordan and the Interior Ministry circle, and unveiled a plaque commemorating the occasion. In an address at the ceremony, which was attended by HRH Prince Abdullah, Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid said the project was vital for easing traffic congestion within Amman. The cost of the project totalled JD8.5 million, according to the mayor, including JD650,000 for the street's construction, JD6.5 million to appropriate required lands and JD1.350 million to build pavements, culverts and lights.

No Jordanians hurt in Jakarta riots

JAKARTA (Petra) — All Jordanians in Indonesia are in good health and none were injured during the recent riots in Jakarta, Jordanian Ambassador to Indonesia Luyah Khashman said Saturday. He added that the Jordanian embassy contacted all Jordanians in the country to inquire about their conditions.

What's going on

- "Trois hommes et un couffin" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibdeh on Monday Nov. 16 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
- A Comprehensive Historical Review of More Than 100 Years of Archaeological Excavations in Jordan by Dr. Hans-Dieter Blieden at Goethe-Institut, Jabel Amman on Monday Nov. 16 at 6:00 p.m.
- Display of Jordan River Foundation (JRF) 1998 autumn/winter collection "Falling Leaves" at the JRF showroom, Jabel Amman (Tel. 4613081), until Nov. 30.
- "Crossroads of Civilisations: More Than 100 Years of German Archaeological Activities in Jordan" (sponsored by the German Protestant Institute in cooperation with Petra Store Preservation) at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.
- A three-dimensional exhibition on canvas by Susanna Caldwell, Darleen Karpowicz, and Rawah, Abu Ghazaleh Silawi at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre (Antism), Jabel Amman, of the Second Circle, until Nov. 30 (Tel. 4647855).
- Exhibition of watercolours by Mukarram Haghdoudoua at Institutum Caraceni, Jabel Amman, until Nov. 24.



OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTES GIFTS TO ORPHANS: Marking His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday, Customs Department Director General Nathani Abdullah distributes gifts to orphaned children. Abdullah said the department presented 220 orphans with gifts (Petra photo)

Construction on adventure game show set begins today

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — Construction on the set of Desert Forges, a sports adventure game series to be filmed at Wadi Rum, will begin today at a cornerstone-laying ceremony expected to be attended by HRH Prince Abdullah.

According to Brice Auboyneau, executive producer of Expand Images Group, the French team that selected Jordan for the project, the game show will be a test of physical endurance and intellectual wit. "Each episode of Desert Forges is a competition between two couples who have to overcome obstacles put in their way at each stage," he said.

Auboyneau told the Jordan Times that 20- to 30-year-old candidates have to cross a 45-

minute track in Wadi Rum to reach a castle. "When the contestants make it to the castle, they have 45 minutes to find a treasure," Auboyneau said, adding that the prize will be an estimated JD6,000 for the winning team.

Examples of earlier EIG productions are "Fort Boyard," "Treasure Hunt," and "La Carte aux Tresors." "Fort Boyard," a sports adventure series of 500 episodes, has been aired on Jordan Television Channel 2. It has been broadcast in 53 countries over the past eight years.

The set for Desert Forges will be completed by mid-April, and filming will begin by May. Countries that have already signed up to participate include Sweden, Denmark, and France.

"We selected Jordan from

four countries in Africa and the Middle East, because Wadi Rum will provide a mythical and symbolic backdrop to the games," said set designer Marc Denize. He explained that the castle will be built to look like a natural extension of Wadi Rum.

The 10-year, JD100,000 project will be implemented by French and Jordanian teams. "We want to work with a Jordanian team. There will be approximately 150 people on the set," Auboyneau added.

The game show is expected to encourage tourism since it is scheduled to be aired in countries such as France, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Italy and England. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has supported this project from its early stages.

Child labour action plan to focus on dropout rehabilitation, legislation

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — Nine-year-old Mohammad spends a large part of each day selling chewing gum in the neighbourhoods of Sweifeh and Abdoun.

"I take the bus back home to Zarqa when I have sold all of the box," said the little boy.

Mohammad makes a maximum profit of JD2 for each box he sells. He gives his parents the money to help his family put food on the table.

"I do go to school, but afterwards I work," Mohammad said. Like many child workers his age, he stays on the streets until late at night, selling whatever he is given to peddle.

Poverty is a major factor behind child labour in Jordan,

with an estimated 22 per cent of the population living in absolute poverty.

Poverty and high inflation have resulted in an increasing number of families in Jordan living under economic hardship, placing a major strain on family and community structures.

"Poverty is a major contributing factor to child labour, [as is] disenchantment with the educational system, which causes children to drop out of school during their elementary years," said Janet Abboud, director of the Research and Database Unit at the National Task Force for Children.

To combat child labour in the Kingdom, the RDU has formulated an action plan based on a

study conducted by the unit and the recommendations of roundtable discussions chaired by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

The plan of action proposes a national strategy based on a new, comprehensive nationwide study of child labour. "Our [original] study focused on the circumstances of working children living in poverty pockets in refugee camps in Amman, Zarqa and Jerash. It was not a representative sample of child labour in all the Kingdom," said Abboud.

She added that the study's emphasis will be on areas of the country where children engage in tourism jobs, such as Wadi Mousa.

"We are also targeting primary school dropouts who take up

smuggling at the Syrian and Iraqi borders, and children in agricultural areas such as the Jordan Valley, and the Irbid industrial city," Abboud said.

The plan calls for the reintegration and rehabilitation of dropouts. "This means designing flexible educational programmes that meet the needs of these children," she added.

Another relevant point is bridging the gaps and inadequacies in labour legislation: child labour, concentrated in informal sectors such as family, agricultural and domestic work, is not covered by the 1996 Labour Law.

"The law does not provide protection for children working in informal sectors and excludes female child workers,

who are predominantly the ones to work in these fields," said Abboud.

A steering committee from both the private and public sectors has been given the responsibility of monitoring and implementing this plan. It is now identifying steps to be taken to fight child labour.

According to Abboud, this committee "will formulate a national policy and strategy for the prevention and elimination of child labour." Working groups will focus on different fields to be tackled by the plan of action.

A legislative committee has been established to "fill the gaps in the labour law within the framework of child labour and child abuse," said Abboud,

adding that "this working group will also tackle the role of social workers at the Ministry of Social Development and will work with inspectors at the Ministry of Labour."

Other responsibilities include formulating a mechanism for enforcing the basic education law. "Even though the law makes basic education compulsory, there is no mechanism to enforce it," Abboud explained.

The next step will be activating programmes and extending help to poor families who rely on their underage children for a livelihood. "Before we take these children out of the labour market... we want to link up their families to relief agencies," Abboud said.

Political parties plan demonstrations in support of Iraq

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — Hours after Interior Minister Nayef Qadi warned political parties that the government would not tolerate any activities that might harm national security, party leaders said they intended to mobilise pro-Iraq gatherings on both the "local and regional level."

"We have to hold vast demonstrations expressing our indignation and condemnation of the unjust American

attack on Iraq, and we should not be acting within certain boundaries set by our governments," said Sa'id Abu Meizar at a public meeting.

Earlier Saturday, Qadi and party leaders reviewed the general situation in the region. The minister conveyed the official Jordanian stand in such an event and stressed the need for a unified Jordanian stance.

"Citizens, political groups and the government are expected to stand united, shouldering their responsibilities in

defence of Jordanian national interests," he said.

Qadi told party leaders that Jordanian citizens could only express their views within the framework of the law, stressing that the government would keep the door open with all parties about any situation in order to protect national interests, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Petra quoted party leaders as expressing concern for Jordan's national interests, but at the meeting they said that

staging anti-U.S. rallies was a constitutional and legal right that would not jeopardise the Kingdom's security.

"The Jordanian Constitution grants us the right to hold rallies and express our minds, and therefore, attempts to restrict our actions should not happen. The nation is facing a big threat, and we should mobilise as much as possible," said lawyer Hussein Mjall.

Other suggestions included holding sit-ins in front of the U.S. and U.K. embassies and sending memorandums

to heads of Arab states and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan urging them to take a stand against U.S. "threats against Iraq."

Former Deputy Toujan Faisal said during the meeting that any coordination with the government on staging a "silent or weak" pro-Iraq rally was as good as striking Iraq.

"The entire population should wake up, our strength lies within the masses. If we don't take action now, we will suffer the consequences," she added.

Far-right snatches Rome from the left

ROME (AFP) — The post-fascist far-right National Alliance (AN) snatched Rome from the left in a photo-finish in Sunday's local elections, in which the abstention rate hit a record high.

The AN's candidate Silvano Morra sneaked just ahead of the centre-left's Rosolino Napolitano in the run-off second round vote with 51.1 per cent of the vote. Turnout was only 43 per cent.

AN leader Gianfranco Fini hailed the result as a "new departure" for the right-wing opposition.

The left's surprise defeat in the Italian capital — where Napolitano had been leading in the first round with 46.8 per cent against 44.7 per cent for her rival — cast a shadow over the otherwise good performance by the left in the rest of the country.

The left held on to the province of Foggia, in the south, and Massa Carrara in the north, and took Benevento in the south, which had been held by the right.

In the seven cities which went to the polls, the left retained the municipalities of Massa, Sondrio, Brescia and Pisa, while the right hung on to Pescara and took Vicenza from the left. The separatist Northern

League comfortably retained control of the city council in Treviso near Venice.

Italian political commentators remarked upon the unusually high abstention level, 42 per cent of the more than 4.3 Italians called to the polls on Sunday. "If it had a spokesman, the abstentionist party could legitimately claim to be the most important movement that Italy has ever seen," the centre-left Rome daily La Repubblica said in an editorial.

The paper slammed the nation's political parties for "having lost the capacity to mobilise the country."

"People are fed up with old politics, fine words, and promises which are never kept," the daily La Stampa commented, saying that the charitable sector in Italy had never been so popular as today.

"Social commitment grows in proportion to the falling off of interest in politics," the paper owned by the prominent industrialist Agnelli family noted.

The Milan daily Il Corriere della Sera said the left had everything to lose in the general disillusionment while La Stampa said the left ran the risk of disappointing an ever more sceptical country.

Kohl hits new government over NATO flap with U.S.

BONN (AP) — Speaking out for the first time since his election defeat, former chancellor Helmut Kohl scolded Germany's new government for challenging the United States over NATO nuclear weapons strategy.

In an interview with the Sunday weekly Welt am Sonntag, Kohl said it was "incomprehensible" that his successors had launched a debate about whether to keep the policy that allows NATO to launch a nuclear attack first.

"Everyone knows that we were the main beneficiary of the Americans' nuclear protection during the cold war," said Kohl, who lost September elections that brought a centre-left government to power.

"If one knows what the Americans did for us, then one also knows what impression a debate launched by Germany about first use of nuclear weapons makes in

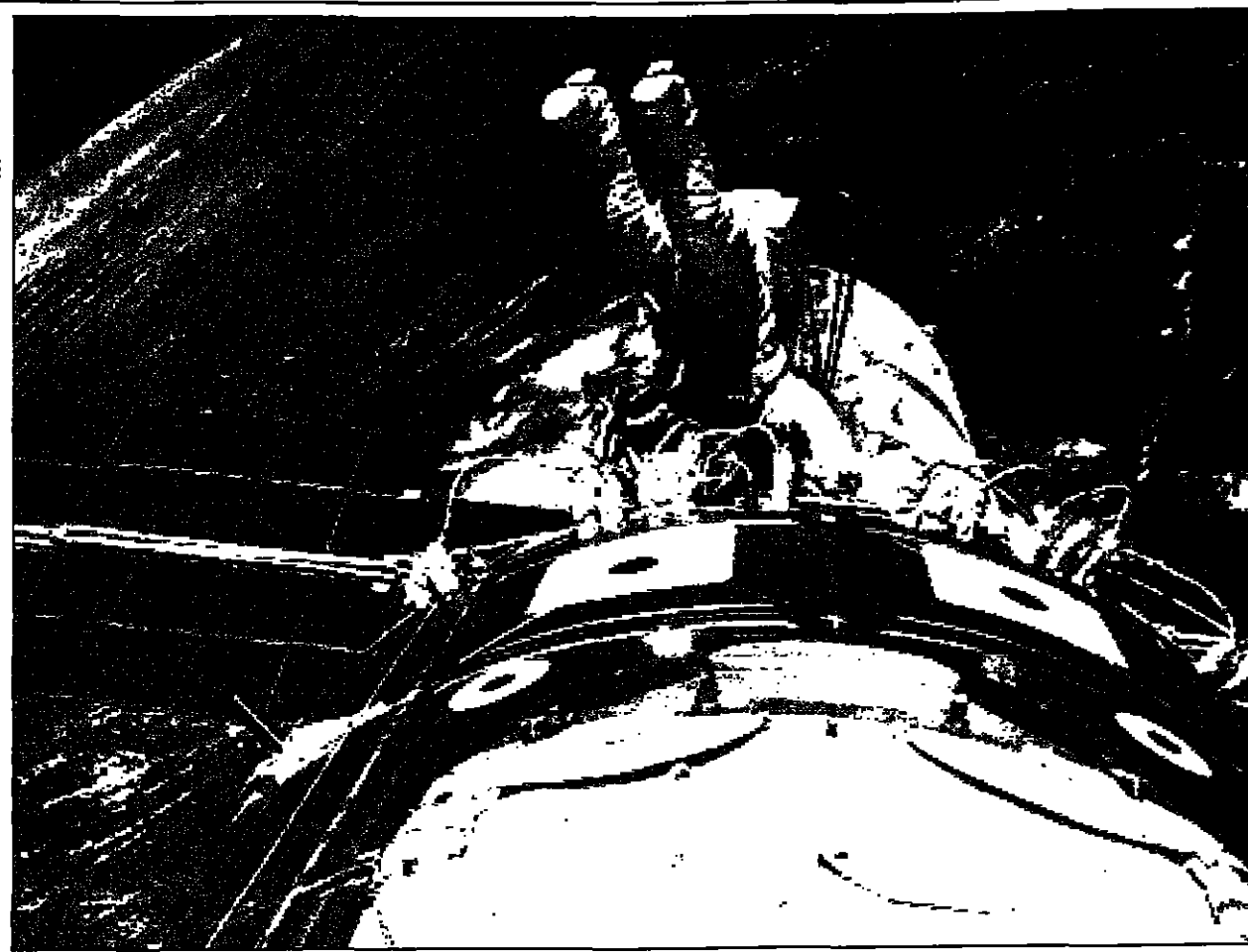
America," Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has suggested that, with the cold war over, NATO should drop the nuclear threat and adopt a "no first use" policy. The Clinton administration has flatly ruled that out.

The United States believes NATO still needs the nuclear threat, particularly to deter attacks with chemical or biological arms.

Fischer is a leader of the Greens, an environmentalist party with an anti-NATO tradition. The Greens are the junior governing partner of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, a Social Democrat.

In an interview aired Sunday night on German television ZDF, Kohl said that despite political differences, he had discussions since his defeat with the new chancellor and foreign minister.

"One has to talk when it's about our country," he said, declining to detail specifics.



Shuttle Endeavor astronaut James Newman holds on to rails of the Unity space module as he completes work on the International Space Station during the final spacewalk of the mission, Dec. 12. The Zarya module can be seen beyond Newman. The crew left the International Space Station Dec. 13 after creating it last week by linking the American-built Unity and the Russian power module Zarya (Reuters photo)

Yugoslav army kills Albanians in border clash

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — Yugoslav border troops killed an unspecified number of armed ethnic Albanians who were trying to cross into Kosovo from Albania, the province's Serbian-run media centre said Monday.

Early in the morning, between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m., large groups of armed Albanians tried repeatedly to cross illegally from Albania to Yugoslavia in the region of the border posts Gorazup and Liken.

West of Prizren, the centre said in a statement.

"There was a clash with the Yugoslav border guards and there are killed and wounded among the Albanians," it said.

The army said it had not suffered any casualties in the clash, the second reported in 11 days.

On Dec. 3, border guards said they killed eight ethnic Albanians they said were trying to bring arms into Kosovo.

Yugoslavia has protested to Albania several times over earlier incidents on their common border, saying they were a deliberate

ploy to upset a shaky peace in Kosovo, where separatist ethnic Albanian guerrillas fought Serbian security forces earlier this year.

At least 1,500 were killed in eight months of fighting and some 250,000 driven from their homes in a fierce crackdown on the population by Serbian security forces.

The two sides stopped fighting in October, when Yugoslavia withdrew many of its forces under threat of NATO airstrikes, but there have been sporadic violations since then.

The international community, which has hundreds of unarmed "verifiers" in the region, is concerned fighting might resume when warmer weather comes in the spring unless Belgrade and Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leaders can agree an autonomy plan.

Kosovo's ethnic Albanians, who outnumber Serbs in the province nine to one, are demanding independence after 10 years of harsh direct rule from Belgrade.

Third lawyer warned as Anwar trial hears of 'trumped up charges'

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The judge in the trial of Anwar Ibrahim threatened a third defence lawyer with contempt of court proceedings Monday following allegations of "trumped up charges" against the ousted Malaysian deputy premier.

The threat followed a sharp exchange between Defence Counsel Christopher Fernando and prosecution witness Musa Hassan, deputy director of the Malaysian police force's criminal investigation department.

Fernando accused Musa of going out of his way to make "very serious allegations" against

Anwar earlier this year when he replied to an affidavit by Anwar's partner Solaimalai Nallakuruppan alleging police brutality.

Nalla was arrested in July for illegally possessing bullets and faces a mandatory death penalty if convicted in a separate trial which has been adjourned until January. His affidavit alleging police brutality was dated Aug. 25, a week before Anwar was dismissed.

The serious allegations against Anwar were done maliciously and have no connection with Nalla's affidavit, Fernando said, referring

to the response filed by Musa in September.

Musa conceded that his response "mentioned the misbehaviour of the accused" but said it was "not true" that the allegations were malicious and unconnected, prompting Fernando to accuse Musa of "mala fide" (bad faith).

"These are trumped up charges. We will show that there were serious efforts made to fabricate charges. One way is to show what happened in Nalla's case," the defence counsel said.

Presiding judge Augustine Paul said Fernando was making "serious allegations" against the authorities.

"If you fail to prove it, I shall institute contempt of court proceedings," Paul said.

The judge has already sentenced one of Anwar's lawyers, Zainur Zakaria, to three months jail for contempt after he filed a court application seeking the removal of two prosecutors accused of fabricating evidence.

Zainur has appealed the sentence, while contempt proceedings against a second lawyer have been dropped after he apologised for the way in which a letter attached to the application was used without his knowledge.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian government unveils women's bill amid protests

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian government introduced controversial legislation Monday which proposes setting aside a third of the seats in parliament and state legislatures for women. "The introduction of the women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha (lower house) is a historic victory for our democracy and women," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Madan Lal Khurana said. But the bill drew noisy protests from deputies representing regional groups, who said the legislation did not reserve seats specifically for Muslim women and women belonging to backward communities. "Take back the women reservation bill," lawmakers from the regional Rashtriya Janata Party, Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samajwadi Party shouted as they stormed into the centre of the house. The introduction of the bill drew applause from members of parliament (MPs) belonging to the ruling coalition and the main opposition party, Congress, which had earlier signalled support for reserving seats for women. Last July the ruling coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party was forced to postpone introduction of the bill after angry lawmakers snatched the papers from Law Minister M. Thambbi Durai. Women's groups have been campaigning for reserved seats to increase their representation. Women MPs currently account for less than 10 per cent of the 545-member lower house. The bill, which would amend the constitution, needs the support of two-thirds of the lower house of parliament.

Czech president suffering from respiratory problems

PRAGUE (AFP) — Czech President Vaclav Havel, who has a long history of health problems, is suffering from a respiratory ailment after a viral infection, his spokesman said Monday. Once a heavy smoker, the 62-year-old former dissident playwright underwent an operation in December 1996 for lung cancer and has repeatedly suffered from bronchitis. He also had 35 centimetres of intestine removed in an emergency operation in Austria in April. He later underwent a tracheotomy, treatment to clear his bronchial tubes, and had an abscess on the abdominal wall removed. He also suffered a heart attack in August. His spokesman said Monday Havel had a slight temperature and was undergoing treatment at his home. However at this point no hospitalisation was necessary, he added. Details of his medical treatment would be made public Wednesday. Havel's appointments between Monday and Wednesday have been cancelled or rescheduled. He had been due to meet Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, on a three-day visit to the Czech Republic, Monday. Havel was also due to hold talks in the early part of this week with the new European Commission head of delegation in the Czech Republic, Ramiro Cebrian; General Henry Shelton, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; and moderate Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova.

Conference aims to empower Nepalese women

KATHMANDU (AFP) — An international conference on women's empowerment in Nepal opened here Monday to identifying and promoting ways for women to contribute to national development, organisers said. The three-day conference, entitled "Breaking New Ground", was organised by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission to Nepal and will include discussion forums and field visits with women's groups in the rural districts of Chitawan, Rupaandhi and Nuwakot. "The strategic objective for women's empowerment adopted by USAID in Nepal is unique among USAID country missions," said Joanne Hale, USAID mission director. "This approach goes beyond the traditional mainstream, which includes gender issues in separate sector projects of the portfolio," she said. Discussion forums will help to identify empowerment practices from around the world for "integrating gender into development," Hale said. Development agencies from 23 countries are represented at the conference. Nepal's Minister for Women and Social Welfare Meena Pandey and U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires Janet Bogue attended the conference opening.

Italian military helicopter crashes in thick fog

TURIN, Italy (R) — An Italian military helicopter crashed in thick fog near the northern city of Turin Monday, killing all four police officers on board, upper house of parliament speaker Nicola Mancino said. Interrupting a session of the Senate in Rome to give news of the crash, Mancino said General Franco Romano, commander of carabinieri police in the northern Piemonte region, was among the victims. The helicopter lost radio contact with the control tower of Volpiano's military airport, on Turin's outskirts, shortly after take-off and crashed some 200 metres from the runway. Firefighters found the four bodies after searching in heavy fog. ANSA said.

Boy wins Lego championship by creating a monster

IRVINE, California (AP) — Some might say 11-year-old Thomas Michon is the Frank Lloyd Wright of Lego builders — with a little Stephen King thrown in for good measure. The Irvine boy won first place in the Lego national championship over the weekend by creating a monster with flapping wings attacking cars on a bridge. The effort won him a trip to the Legoland theme park, scheduled to open in March in Carlsbad. There, he'll be presented with a statue in his likeness made of the interlocking plastic bricks. "I think I may end up with a job building things," said the boy, who has been playing with Lego bricks since he was 3. At age 5, he won the Lego World Cup in Denmark. He spends about 20 hours each week building things from the nearly 80,000 Lego pieces in his collection. He also plays baseball, computer games and the violin.

Village couple wed in helicopter

BANGALORE, India (AP) — Last year, red pepper trader Karin Abbas married his wife atop an elephant. This year, wishing a memorable wedding for his younger brother too, Abbas had him married in an airborne helicopter. Sunday, thousands of residents of Alipur village in Karnataka state, who had never seen a helicopter before, gathered to watch the "bird" descend on a dry farm field. The groom and bride took off in a helicopter, accompanied by two Islamic priests, who administered the vows during the 20-minute flight. "It was such an extraordinary feeling that words fail me," said Zamin Abbas, the groom. The Abbas family could not afford the normal rates for hiring a helicopter, but the owner reduced the price because of the novelty of the wedding.

Chinese dissident back from exile faces subversion charges

BEIJING (AP) — Foreign reporters will be barred from the most high-profile prosecution of a dissident in China in two years, a government official said Monday.

Three days before Wang Youcai's trial on subversion charges, court officials in Hangzhou city have not decided if any public observers will be allowed to attend, said a Zhejiang provincial government spokesman, who only gave his surname, Bao.

Wang was a principal organiser of the would-be China Democracy Party, which sought to challenge the Communist Party's 49-year ban on opposition politics. He was among the first to announce the opposition group's forma-

tion in June.

His trial Thursday will likely be the first of several against prominent dissidents involved in the party. Xu Wenli and Qin Yongmin, arrested at the start of the crackdown two weeks ago, have also been accused of endangering state security, a catchall crime that includes subversion.

A long-exiled dissident who sneaked into China to help boost the democracy party's organisation, Wang Ce, has also been charged with endangering state security, the Hong Kong-based Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement reported Monday.

Wang Ce, who left China in 1984, earned a

Ph.D. in Hawaii and then settled in Spain, slipped into China via Macau in October.

Authorities in Hangzhou city detained him on Nov. 2 immediately after he met with Wang Youcai, the Information Centre said.

Two other activists detained along with Wang Ce — Li Li, who had been living in France, and Huang Heging, a local activist from Zhejiang province — remain in detention.

Wang Ce was an active participant in Chinese dissident politics abroad and had been refused permission previously to return to China, the group said.

The charge against Wang Ce probably stems

from his plans to give \$1,000 to Wang Youcai to buy a computer, the Hong Kong-based Information Centre said.

Wang Youcai first rose to prominence as a student leader of the democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989. He would be the most influential member of the dissident community to be put on trial since fellow student leader Wang Dan in 1996.

Although foreign reporters have been barred, judicial officials in Hangzhou have not decided whether the trial will be closed to the public, said the Zhejiang spokesman, Bao.

Prominent trials almost always result in guilty verdicts in China's politi-

cally malleable judicial system.

Wang Youcai's efforts to form a defence have been frustrated.

One lawyer who planned to take the case, Wang Wenjiang, has been detained three times in the past two days and was believed to be in custody Monday, the Information Centre said. Calls to the lawyer's office for comment were not answered.

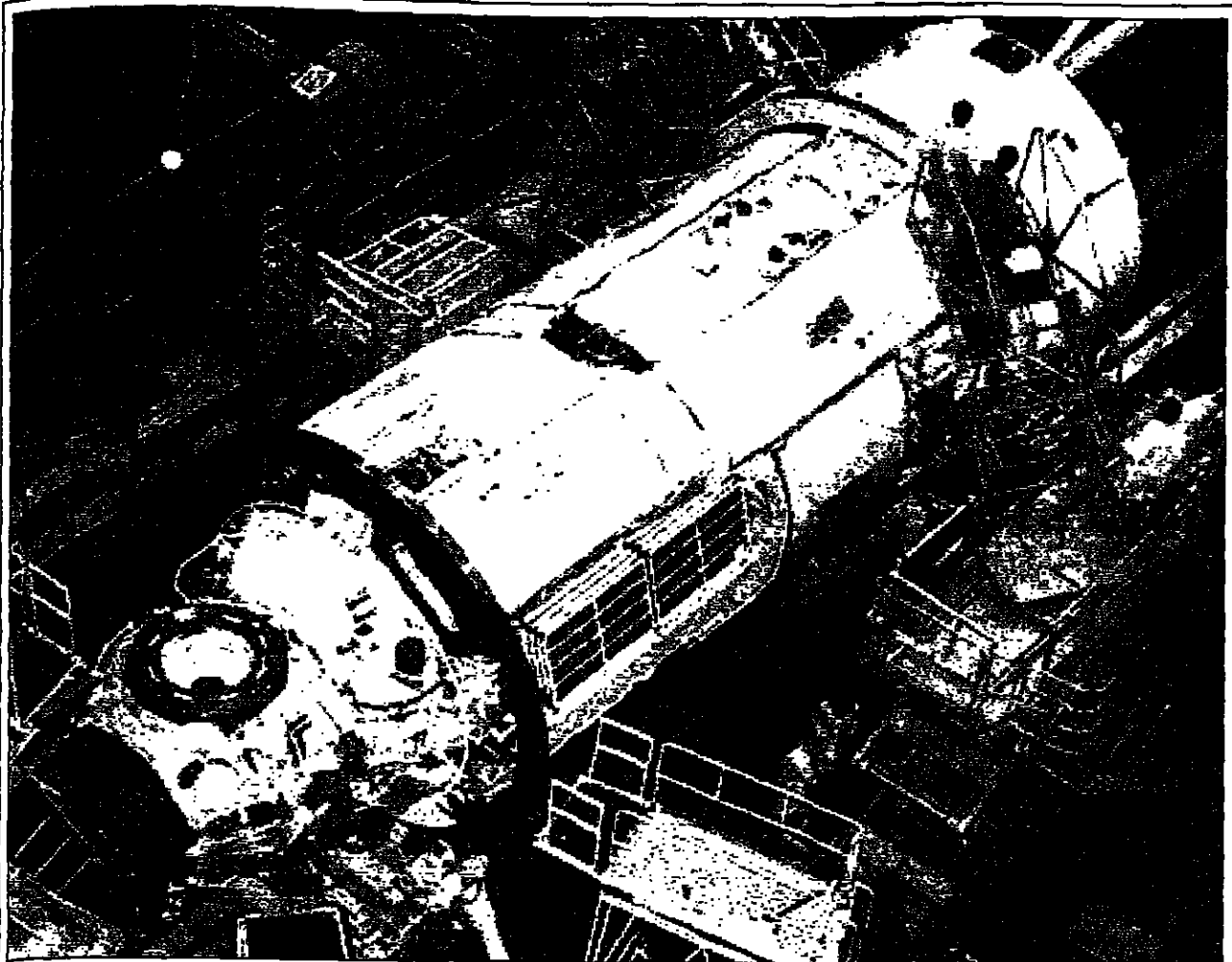
Despite the intensity of the crackdown, small but bold groups in China have called on the government to release the democracy advocates.

A friend of Wang Youcai in his hometown in Zhejiang province gathered signatures from 160 farmers, private bus-

nessmen and others arguing he had been exercising legitimate rights and appealing for his immediate release, the Information Centre reported.

Exiled dissidents also have been lobbying on behalf of the democracy campaigners. Monday, 22 of them released a statement calling on U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and governments and human rights groups to pressure China for the release of Xu, Qin, Wang Youcai and Wang Ce.

The statement from the Washington-based Free China Movement said the crackdown showed China was violating rights protected under two key U.N. human rights treaties Beijing signed in the past 14 months.



Engineers at the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan make final checks on the Zarya module of the International Space Station. Russia is due to launch Nov. 20 this first module of the new space station, bringing together the United States, Russia, Europe, Canada and Japan in space research (Reuters photo)

Buenos Aires 'a step forward in global warming fight'

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore said the global warming action plan struck here Saturday was a "critical step" but that much work remained to be done.

"The agreement reached early today in Buenos Aires ensures that the nations of the world will continue moving forward against the threat of global warming," Gore said in a statement circulated at the end of the U.N. climate change conference here.

"Barely a year after the

historic agreement in Kyoto, we are making progress in fulfilling its promise," Gore said.

Last December in Japan, 38 industrialized nations crafted the Kyoto Protocol that calls for them to cut back greenhouse gas emissions — mostly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels such as coal and oil — an average five per cent from 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012.

Gore said he was particularly pleased by the growing engagement of developing countries in

cutting back greenhouse gas emissions. Earlier this week, Argentina and Kazakhstan unveiled plans to take steps on their own.

Thursday the United States boosted spirits of protocol supporters by putting its signature on the accord at U.N. headquarters in New York.

"In signing the Kyoto Protocol, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to work with other nations to resolve the many issues still before us.

"I look forward to achieving the kind of

progress we need before we can submit the protocol for the approval of the U.S. Senate," he said.

The protocol is expected to generate fierce opposition in the senate. Opponents say imposing cuts on the United States without requiring developing countries such as China to do their share would jeopardize industries and jobs.

Gore attended part of the Kyoto meeting but chose to sit out the conference in Buenos Aires.

Clinton extends more aid to victims of Mitch

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Saturday announced new U.S. steps to aid countries in Central America devastated by Hurricane Mitch, including an extra \$45 million to expand the Pentagon's relief and reconstruction efforts.

In his weekly radio address, Clinton also said he had asked Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin to find the best way to provide debt relief and emergency financial aid from the United States and the international community.

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service would also extend its stay of deportation for nationals from Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala — the four nations which bore the brunt of floods and mudslides

spawned by Mitch — through the end of the year, the president said.

"Central Americans have taken great strides in the last decade in ending conflicts and strengthening democracies," Clinton said. "We must not, and we will not, let a hurricane drown these aspirations."

Two weeks ago, the remnants of Hurricane Mitch ploughed through Central America, killing some 11,000 people. The deadliest Atlantic storm in two centuries, it dumped tonnes of mud and rock on cities and towns throughout the impoverished region, causing billions of dollars in damage.

The United States already has agreed to provide \$80 million in emergency aid and 1,300 American troops are

assisting with relief, providing food, water and medicine, rebuilding roads and delivering supplies.

The additional \$45 million would allow the Pentagon to expand those efforts, Clinton said.

Other countries around the world have come to the aid of Honduras and Nicaragua, which were hardest hit by Mitch. Hundreds of people also died in neighbouring El Salvador and Guatemala.

Thousands of people remain missing and three million lost their homes or were severely affected, most of them in Nicaragua and Honduras, which have a combined population of about 10 million.

Joining Clinton in the radio address, Vice

President Al Gore's wife Tipper, who led a U.S. delegation to Central America, said she was struck by the spirit she encountered.

"They are not defeated. They're cleaning up and they are rebuilding their lives ... you can see this disaster has destroyed their homes but not their spirits."

"They will survive and we will stand with them as they do," she said.

Mexico, France, Japan and Britain also have lent use of their military forces to help Central America recover, while dozens more countries have sent relief supplies and millions of dollars in cash.

France, Austria, Germany, Cuba and Spain have written off millions more in debt.

British movie star, wife of disgraced 60s politician dies at 81

LONDON (AP) — Valerie Hobson, a film star who stood by her disgraced husband John Profumo following Britain's greatest sex and security scandal of the 1960s, has died at the age of 81.

Hobson died suddenly in a London hospital Friday, according to death notices published in The Daily Telegraph and The Times.

Press Association, the British news agency, reported Saturday that she died of a heart attack.

Her best known film roles were opposite Alec Guinness in "Kind Hearts and Coronets" and as Estella in David

Lean's version of "Great Expectations." Born in Larne, Northern Ireland, her stage career began in storybook fashion at age 15 when she was lunching with her mother at Claridge's Hotel.

Oscar Hammerstein spotted her, inviting her to audition for his new show, "Bell at the Savoy."

At 18, she won a contract with Universal studios. Her Hollywood roles included the part of the bride in "Bride of Frankenstein" in 1935, when she also appeared in "Rendezvous at Midnight," "The Mystery of Edwin

Drood," "Chinatown Squad," "The Great Impersonation" and "Oh What a Night." After "Tugboat Princess" in 1936, all her later work was in Britain.

She retired as an actress in 1953, a year after her divorce from her first husband, Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan. She then married the wealthy Profumo, a rising star in the Conservative Party, in 1954.

Profumo resigned as minister for war in 1963 after the exposure of his affair with Christine Keeler — who was conducting a simultaneous affair with a Soviet military attaché.

Profumo devoted the rest of his life to quietly rebuilding his reputation through unpaid volunteer work — with the devoted support of his wife.

In a rare interview nine years ago, she said: "Love is the most important thing — I have been very happy to have had it."

"Providing a shoulder to lean on has been enough for me and as long as my husband is all right I am happy. I have also had great energy and been able to keep going in very difficult times."

Hobson is survived by Profumo, their son, two sons by her first marriage and six grandchildren.

Russian peace gambit overshadows Obuchi's return

TOKYO (AFP) — A controversial offer by Russia to deal with the issue of the disputed Kuril islands separately from a peace treaty with Japan overshadowed Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi's return home Saturday from a Moscow summit with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Opposition parties charged that the Moscow summit had failed to "lay the path to the return of the islands," while the leading economic daily Nihon Keizai said "substantial territorial talks have been postponed."

With surprising candour, Moscow's ambassador to Japan Alexander Panov said Russia had proposed signing the peace treaty with Japan and wanted to settle the territorial dispute at a later date.

Yeltsin suggested to Obuchi that the treaty should commit the two countries to resolving the territorial row later, Panov said in an interview with Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK).

The Russian side proposed at the summit to "mention in the peace

treaty that the territorial question shall be resolved and have another treaty decide the details," he added.

The Russian proposal contrasted sharply with Obuchi's remarks at a post-summit news conference in Moscow that there had been no change in Tokyo's determination to reclaim the southern Kurils.

Moscow's occupation of the islands, seized by Soviet forces at the end of World War II, has prevented the two sides from signing a peace treaty for more than 50 years and hindered their economic cooperation.

"I want to underline that our position has not changed," said Obuchi, who was making the first official visit to Moscow by a serving Japanese premier in 25 years.

"That means that resolving the territorial question (and) concluding a peace treaty by the year 2000," he said, adding: "I would like to hope we have the understanding of Russia (on that)."

The Russian proposal was intended as an answer to an undisclosed offer made on

the island row by the then Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto when he met Yeltsin in the Japanese report of Kawana in April.

Hashimoto was reported to have suggested that the two sides first redefine their boundary before considering the tougher question of who should administer the islands.

In a summit five months earlier in the Siberian town of Krasnyarsk, the two leaders agreed to solve the island row and conclude a peace treaty by 2000, and give impetus to trade and investment links.

Moscow and Tokyo have agreed to keep secret both the Hashimoto offer and the Yeltsin answer as any territorial compromises could spark off resentment at home with Yeltsin's health and Obuchi's leadership held in question.

Obuchi signed a so-called Moscow Declaration with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov in which the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to strike the peace deal by 2000.

The document said the

two countries would create a special committee to work on their joint economic management on the southern Kurils and another to draw up a border between the two countries.

"It is a pity that I could not settle the question with a single stroke of the sword," Obuchi said when he met at his official residence with former residents of the disputed islands — Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets.

"I have strongly requested that you be made free to visit the islands from a humanitarian standpoint," the premier said. "The president expressed his understanding."

But the Nihon Keizai newspaper pointed out "President Yeltsin did not respond with a straightforward answer to the Hashimoto proposal."

"We can hardly say there has been a breakthrough," the daily said. "The Japanese side should follow the strategy of working out an agreement on joint economic activities on the islands, which could lead to effective rule by Japan."

Anti-government protest breaks out in Kuala Lumpur

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — More than 1,000 people rallied in downtown Kuala Lumpur late Saturday, voicing their displeasure with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad's 17-year rule.

"Mahathir is power-crazy," said one banner. Another read "APEC, help us" in reference to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit being held in the Malaysian capital next week.

Several protesters pounded their fists on a stopped van,

after its driver got out and started complaining about the demonstration. He jumped back in and drove off without being hurt.

There were no other reports of any disturbances in the rally, which took place in the Kampong Baru section of the capital.

Many of the protesters were shouting "reform, reforms," while others screamed "God is great." Cars driving by honked their horns and waved in approval, as the demonstration

remained predominantly peaceful, though noisy.

There was only a minimal police presence nearby.

The government has flooded Kuala Lumpur with 5,700 police and security officers, to squelch any trouble during the APEC summit Tuesday and Wednesday.

Saturday's rally was held after prayers at the Kampong Baru mosque, where last month the country's first violent protest in nearly three decades erupted between anti-

government demonstrators and police.

Mahathir, the host of next week's Pacific Rim summit, has said he expected pro-Anwar rallies to break out in the coming days.

Anwar is on trial for abuse of power, sodomy and other sexual misconduct allegations. He has firmly denied all the charges.

"The laws of Malaysia have been sodomised," read one of the banner's in Saturday night's protest.

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The new Muslims

Why are so many converting to a religion with probably the worst press of all time

By Paul Vallely

KATHLEEN'S IS a story we like to think is typical. After finishing her training as a nurse-midwife in Dublin, she found a job in a hospital in Egypt. There she met a local doctor, married him and became a Muslim. Conversion because of marriage. We can cope with that.

But hers is not a representative case. Islam is beset by stereotypes, many of them without foundation, and this is one. For the story of the small but steadily expanding number of Westerners who are converting to the religion of Mohammad has something to say to us all.

Ours is a time of collective apprehensiveness. Economic uncertainty, job instability and the dissolution of the family under the pressures of the market spread a sense of insecurity. We feel a prickling weirdness with the materialism and science that have silently robbed us of our sense of meaning and mystery. And so we are becoming used to the idea that increasing numbers of people are embarked upon a spiritual search through our syncretic times. But what is it that draws so many of them to the religion which has possibly the worst press of any in our age?

Kathleen Roche-Nagi (her surname is half-Irish and half-Egyptian, reflecting her chequered history) was one of a group of white converts I met recently at the cluster of low brick buildings that house the Islamic Foundation at Markfield, near Leicester. They met under the aegis of the New Muslims' programme, though some of them embraced Islam as much as 20 years ago.

The majority of neophytes are between 35 and 55, said Batool Al Torna, an Irish-woman who was once called Mary. With her broad features accentuated by her hijab (Islamic headscarf) she looks, in her forties, disturbingly like the nun she once intended to be. "Many have grown-up sons and daughters, or have lost a partner through death or divorce," she said. "Or else have serious concerns about society slipping slowly down the slope. They feel there's got to be a better way."

There are no national figures for conversion, but at Markfield — which was founded by members of Pakistan's militant Jamiat-Islami party, but which has more recently received funding from the Saudi and other Gulf states — they see around 80 converts a year. They are attracted to Islam by studying Islamic art, architecture or languages, by visiting a Muslim country, or just through meeting Muslims. "Very few come by marriage," said Batool.

For many, Islam is the end of a spiritual odyssey. One of the younger converts, Sarah Parker, who has been a Muslim for four years, falls into that category. She was training to be a classical ballet dancer when she injured her back. All that Harley Street and extensive physiotherapy could do was to no avail, and she turned to alternative medicine. Shiatsu Japanese massage led to meditation and then to polarity therapy. But something about the world of holistic healing disturbed her.

"It was its exclusivity. It was very expensive, and reached only the moneyed white middle classes," she said. "To me, there seemed to be a contradiction between helping people and making money. I thought there must be another way. Then it seemed that only religion took spirituality to ordinary people without charging."

She tried Buddhism. Then she started reading books about Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. "For me, the sudden experience — the awakening that there was more to the universe than atheism offered — came while I was involved in holistic healing. The decision to become a Muslim was a gradual one."

But Sarah's journey from atheism to Islam is not the norm, either. Male converts have a variety of backgrounds, but what the greatest number of New Muslim women have in common is that they were previously Roman Catholics. "I was brought up a very strict Catholic and taught that every other religion was weird," said Kathleen Roche-Nagi. "But today, the practice of my Islam is not much different from what my Catholicism was."

There is more to this than yearning for a sure framework of fixed theology and values. Several of those with a former Catholic background, revealingly, turned to Islam because of dissatisfaction with the changes made by the Second Vatican Council, whose move from Latin to the vernacular symbolised a revolution in the church's interaction with the modern world.

"I felt a little betrayed by Catholicism. As I grew, the goalposts were shifting," said Batool. "In Catholicism, it became difficult to pin anybody down on what constituted a sin. As a child I had been taught never to chew the Eucharist, and to take great care never to let it fall to the ground; now here they were sticking it in your hand. The rules kept changing. Religions shouldn't change to suit you; if it is God's revealed religion, you should change to suit it."

All of which does not necessarily go down well with relatives and friends, even if they do share the

same conservative religious temperament. "When I was a girl, I wanted to become a nun," said Batool. "My mother didn't like the idea; she told me it was premature. I think she's probably sorry now."

"Relatives of converts from such a background often feel let down, asking 'why isn't Catholicism good enough for you?' But in my mother's case, she can see the lifestyle we have and the way our children are brought up and she approves of that. It's how she and my father tried to bring us up; my mum and dad. I say, are the best Muslims I know." The reaction from outsiders can be even more problematic, particularly to women wearing the Islamic headscarf. Hostility comes from fellow whites in the form of aggressive questions such as: "Why are you wearing that old rag on your head?" But some Asian Muslims also demand who the hell the white women in a hijab think they are.

The scarf can have advantages. Batool recalls how she was once waved through a security checkpoint in Ireland, despite the fact that she had two Muslim men in the back of the car. The policeman, thinking she was from the local convent, cheerfully waved her through with the words: "Right you are, Sister."

But, by and large, the vast majority of the population is still unable to take on board the notion of a white Muslim. "Once you put on the scarf people start to talk to you as if you are deaf or stupid," said Batool. "They treat you as though you were a foreigner," said Sarah. "Policemen ask to see your passport. If I had a shaved head and body-piercing it would be less trouble."

At the root of the response is the standard Western view of Islam as a fount of sexism, political extremism and legal barbarism. It is a view that the white converts do not recognise. And they rebut its three main charges: on misogyny, fundamentalism, and primitivism in its law.

"It's a media fiction that Islam represses women," said Kathleen scornfully. "At any rate it doesn't where I live — in Grimsby."

She is confident the same will be true for her two daughters, who are the only Muslims at their school. She sees no contradiction in her insistence that when they marry it must be to Muslims — which Islamic law will not apply to her two sons.

The repeated defence of Islam from converts was that it was vital to separate the teaching of Islam from the cultural traditions of the Indian subcontinent, which shape the behaviour of most British Muslims. "Even in the Gulf, underneath the head-to-toe black women are not just wearing full make-

up and Christian Dior in bright colours," said Sarah. "They are also highly educated, though no one believes this back in the West." Batool, whose first contact with Islam was through Malaysian Muslims, agreed: "The Islam I encountered was educated and active, not repressive or dogmatic. It had an integrity of spirituality; it was not following rules. It demonstrated equality between men and women."

Those without such experience may take more persuading. There is enough in the Koran, and in the hadith — the canonical sayings of the Prophet — which rule that a woman's testimony is worth only half that of a man, that her inheritance rights must be lesser, and that woman is to be seen as Satan when a man is sexually tempted — to make a prima facie case for misogyny. But when I said so, the women offered arguments of extenuation and explanation.

On the question of the zealotry of Islamic politics, Kathleen, who travels regularly back to Egypt, was just as robust. "It's a tiny minority. Fundamentalism is not the Islam I know. Caricaturing all Muslims as extremists is like saying all Catholics are IRA bombers," she said. But Sarah went some way to acknowledging Western concerns: "Muslim defences are up, because Muslims have lost confidence in themselves, partly because of colonisation. Many don't know of the achievements in philosophy, mathematics and medicine in Muslim cultures during what were the Dark Ages in Europe."

And yet the distance which even Sarah — who has only been a Muslim for four years — has travelled from the views she once shared with secular society is evident, too. Islamic law, which causes such profound distaste in the West with its traditions of beatings and beatings, needs some revision, she concedes: "If you look back to the time when Islam was the dominant culture, you find that the sharia was very progressive. The essence of the law is to promote values to make individuals who are outstanding, and a safe, just community."

"Sharia is misunderstood. It needs to be brought up to date. If the law says two unmarried people who have sex should be banished for a year and given lashes, we have to ask, what is the equivalent of banishment in our society, and what's the equivalent of lashes?"

Her idea of modernising seemed, to my secularised ears, gruesomely limited. Instead of the Koranic punishment of stoning to death, she suggested the alternative of the electric chair. And, ultimately, she defended the severing of limbs. "Of

course, cutting off the hand is the last option," she said. "It's the last thing in the world an Islamic judge would want to do. A judge would try his utmost to avoid it."

"But it works. If you drop a watch on the floor in Kuwait or Saudi it will still be there when you come back two hours later. And you feel safe as a woman there in a way you can never do in London."

This is strong stuff. Has she always felt this? Once, she responded, she was opposed to the death penalty. But, "to be anti-capital punishment at the moment is fashionable. But it is only a fashion. It's not Islam that has changed my mind on that, but age and experience." I asked her how old she was. She said she was 27.

The dichotomy for the West and Islam here is that the Koran is regarded as the unalterable, eternally valid Word of God, dictated to the Prophet by the Angel Gabriel. It is, therefore — unlike the Bible for mainstream Christians — not held to be open to reinterpretation. It is that, in part, which explains its attraction to women such as Kathleen, Batool and Sarah.

"It's given me freedom," said Sarah, "from the pressures which people say are freedom, but which are new forms of slavery." When Plato was discussing perception and reality, she said, he used the image of a man in a cave who sees people dancing on a wall, only to realise they are shadows from the fire. "Then he rises out of the cave and realises how it has limited his vision when he sees the whole sky. That's how Islam has changed the way I see the world."

"Islam gives me peace," said Kathleen. "Oh, I have a nice house and things, but I'm not trapped in them. You can't take them into the next world. Until I became a Muslim, it was as if I was driving through life in constant rain. Islam has put the windscreen-wipers on."

A hint of that, she hopes, came to her mother just before she died. "Mother used to look at my scarf and say: 'Take that off.' I thought she'd never be reconciled. But when she died last year, I was at the bedside with my sister, who was wearing a miniskirt. Mother was in pain. She turned to my sister and snapped: 'Why don't you dress properly, like Kathleen?'"

It was a reconciliation of sorts. Yet there is clearly a long way to go before society in general comes even to that grudging accommodation with the new religion in our midst.

— The Independent

Culture

A contemporary interpretation of Jordan in batik, jewellery and mixed media

By Sally Bland

RICHNESS OF texture is what really captures the viewer's eye upon entering the current exhibition at Artisana, the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre, in Jabal Amman. The three-dimensional works of Susanna Caldwell, Darleen Karpowicz and Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi range from painting and sculpture to batik and jewellery. The range of materials utilised by the artists is even broader. Paintings are adorned with pottery shards; plaster and terra cotta figures are intertwined with egg shells and palm fronds; cloth, papier-mache, wood, metal, glass, stones and embroidery snatches are combined in unexpected ways. The predominance of texture is further enhanced by the exhibits being displayed among the rugs, pottery, carved wood and embroidery of Artisana's permanent handicraft collection.

If this sounds like variety to the

point of confusion, the reality is something else. Each exhibit projects a well-defined image and, in some cases, a message. Moreover, these seemingly quite different forms of art have several things in common. All incorporate elements of architecture. Several of Caldwell's sculptures are built up as house-like structures with a series of cubicles, cubby-holes, roofs and cellars. Karpowicz's batiks depict the buildings, domes and towers of the skyline in older quarters of Amman, as well as the homes, stairways and arched doorways of Jabal Al Weibdeh and Salt. Some of the pendants designed by Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi are miniature replicas of arched windows and doors.

All three women have integrated elements of the ancient past into modern images, themes and techniques. Age-old Mideastern symbols, such as "the eye" and the hand of Fatima, appear in Rawabi's jewellery. Besides her

framed batiks, Karpowicz has crafted a set of painted canvas wall hangings — "to break out of frames," as she says; these are decorated with the hand of Fatima and traditional geometrical patterns. Several of Caldwell's mixed-media collages, like the one entitled "Whispers of History," contain actual pottery shards found in Jordan. Others celebrate the graceful form of the amphora, the two-handled clay jar with a tapered bottom, whose design dates back 4,000 years.

The distinctiveness and diversity of these three women's art can be traced to cross-cultural influences. Though a U.S. citizen, Susanna Caldwell has spent a good part of her life in the Middle East, residing in Egypt, Yemen and Saudi Arabia before she came to Jordan five years ago. Darlene, who is from California, has also lived in Yemen, as well as in Pakistan and Poland. Rawabi has worked with artists in the U.S., Italy and Cyprus and cites travel as one of her sources of inspiration.

Themes and messages are most apparent in Susanna Caldwell's works. Each of her sculptures has been moulded with a specific intent. One example is "Affinities," which is done in sun-drenched Mediterranean colours — bright green, blue, orange and yellow. Susanna says this work was inspired by camouflage, blending in with nature, and the importance of being in harmony with the environment. "I tried to show the home and person as an extension of nature," she explains. "We've lost this sense with urbanisation, yet it is so important for our happiness and integrity, I would even say for our morality."

To the painted canvas backdrop of "Affinities" is attached a three-dimensional "house" of several storeys. In the rooms are small figures — mother and child, couples, a loner — at work or in repose, while children climb in the trees and up the stairs, waving leafy branches. The whole structure is built into a cliff and suspended over the ocean as if to show that human life and creation are ever dependent on the forces of nature, no matter how substantial or indepen-



Darleen Karpowicz's 'Salt' on batik

dent they may seem.

In another picture-sculpture entitled "Fertility," eggs inhabit the cubicles of the house, cared for by male and female figures. "I wanted to show the joys of having offspring and future generations," says Susanna. "There is, however, one negative note — the egg impaled on barbed wire. This shows the danger of overprotecting children or the dangers to which they may be exposed by war."

Darleen Karpowicz taught herself how to do batik "for fun," while she was studying art and textile production at the University of Southern California. In 1981, she moved to Yemen where she taught art for five years, meanwhile researching, collecting, painting and photographing Yemeni women's costumes and handicrafts of the region. Her subsequent move to Baluchistan, Pakistan, enriched her first-hand experience with other styles of traditional folk art, such as the gold embroidery done by Pushtoon women. In Quetta, she directed a U.N.-funded, income-generating programme for Afghan refugee women, which also included literacy and health education. Later moving to Poland, she worked for the NGO which assisted artisans around the world in marketing their products.

In each place she has lived, Darleen Karpowicz has produced batiks, paintings and other works of art related to the specific location. Though she has

only lived in Jordan for two years,

the batiks on show attest to her ability to observe, capture and recreate the atmosphere of a place. The muted blues, browns, greens and greys in which she reproduced the homes and skylines of Amman and Salt, approximate the quality of light one actually sees at certain times in the afternoon here. In contrast to Caldwell who has previously painted numerous water-colours of Jordan's natural beauty and rural life, Karpowicz admits to being more attracted to urban landscapes. She is fascinated by city scenes and does not plan to depict Jordan's famous monuments such as Petra.

The jewellery exhibited by Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi is the product of 17 years of experience, although she only began marketing her pieces eight years ago. Interested in all art forms, she previously sculpted, and has training in pottery, stone-setting, weaving, glass painting and working with gold, silver and copper. The influence of all these art forms is clearly visible in her necklaces, rings, brooches and earrings. Besides combining various kinds of metal and stones, she uses cloth, glazed pottery and embroidery snatches as components of her jewellery, and achieves unusual effects. Each piece is beautifully designed and



Wallhanging by Darleen Karpowicz

crafted, but this is not the usual type of jewellery that is simply beautiful. There is an element of surprise, even playfulness. While some pieces reflect the calm symmetry of arabesque, others convey a more modern sense of being a bit off-balance. Some are comparable to paintings, not necessarily because they are pictorial, but because each is based on a concept. "Like with a picture, the idea is the most important element in creating my jewellery," Rawabi says. "I get my ideas from within myself, from reading, from certain scenes or views, from meeting new people or travelling abroad."

Literally none of this jewellery is anywhere near flat. Ringstones are not set into the band but protrude dramatically. Necklace pendants are quasi-sculptures. Each is a unique design, suggesting its own story. Some are so rich in colour, so striking in design and so three-dimensional as to convey a theatrical effect as if they belonged to the costume of a character in a play.

The exhibition opened on October 28th and can be seen daily from 9:30 until 6:30, except Friday, until November 20th.



Susanna Caldwell's 'Contemplation IV' in mixed media

Daily

Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Banker urges better relations with Arabs, describes fluctuation in ties as weak point

*** "DESPITE ALL attempts to activate the Jordanian-Israeli relations, it will not be able to represent any weight, from an economic point of view, similar or equal to that between Jordan and Arab countries in general and the neighbouring Arab states (Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Saudi Arabia) in particular," said Wasef Azar, the general manager of the Jordan National Bank. "Consequently, the instability in the Jordanian-Arab relations and the fluctuations of the ties constitute a weak point, especially on the economic side," he added stressing that that requires more positive approaches on the part of Jordan.

Azar said: "Frankly, the economic stability in Jordan is part of the Arab economy in the region and that necessitates a change in some of Jordan's policies to go in line with such a perception."

The respected banker said the Kingdom was suffering from deficits in the two basic components that drive development. "Investment resulting from local savings is limited and, together with what is secured through loans and direct investments from abroad, is directed to sectors which yield low return and which are short-living in the productive cycle," he pointed out.

Azar blasted the lavish style of housing, whether in terms of space or in using high-cost imported inputs describing that as a negative factor in the development process from two aspects. First, by placing a high percentage of the investment in such a

type of unproductive activity and, secondly, by raising imports and consuming foreign exchange.

He indicated that both negative factors are responsible for low growth, high deficits in the trade balance and balance of payments, especially if they were associated with non-Jordanian labour.

Noting that waste or misuse of capital is not limited to lavish and luxurious construction activity, Azar stressed the management of investment as an important factor to improve productivity. "Good planning and implementing projects at the lowest cost and quickest time are among many elements that lead to improved returns," he said.

Azar gave as an example the fertiliser project in the mid-70s when the delay in implementing the project pushed up the cost of the project by no less than \$60 million. "As a result, the project lost its profitability for many years," he added.

The senior banker saw the government unable to use many of the available tools to influence and organise the economic activity because of the high number of employees in the public sector. He indicated that the government's general budget has become a matter of collecting funds to the treasury instead of being an important financial tool.

Azar saw the government's aim as securing the necessary funds to spend most of it on paying salaries to employees sitting at their offices doing normal unproductive routine work (Al Dostour + Al Ra'i).

World business body sets up cyber crime unit

GENEVA (R) — The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the world's leading private business grouping, has announced it was setting up a special unit to help companies around the globe combat cyber crime.

ICC official and crime specialist Eric Ellen told a news conference the unit would also work with the Lyons-based Interpol, the international police organisation, in fighting crime committed through the Internet.

The new unit, an arm of the Paris-based ICC's Commercial Crime Services which itself operates under Ellen from London, would be "a prime source of information, research and intelligence" on the type of crimes firms could expect.

The move was welcomed at the news conference by Interpol chief Ray Kendall, like Ellen, a former senior British policeman.

Kendall said Interpol had been pushing for years for cooperation with the private sector as technological advances made clear that crimes like money laundering, electronic fraud and industrial espionage would boom in the Internet age.

"Frankly, we are not prepared for this explosion,"

he said.

But the private sector, with funds that could be quickly directed to purchasing equipment that governments took time to authorise, could move much more quickly in response.

Ellen said the new unit — to recruit young experts on computer technology and its use by criminals and fraudsters — was being set up in response to demand from the ICC's thousands of member companies in over 130 countries.

Peter Jenkins, a U.S. consultant, told the news conference a major problem was that it was difficult to establish the exact extent of crime committed through abuse of the Internet and companies' own electronic systems.

"It is like an iceberg — we only have a slight indication of what lies below the surface," he said.

In one recent case, two men in St. Petersburg, Russia, broke into the system of a major U.S. bank and transferred funds held by corporate customers worth \$10.5 million to accounts they controlled, ICC officials said.

Ellen said companies often did not report offences to police — either because they did not know they had occurred or

for commercial reasons.

But they would be able to inform the new unit, which would use their information to warn other firms, with certainty that their experiences would be treated in confidentiality.

Information presently available, he told the news conference, suggested the incidence of cyber crime would grow at least in line with the increase in new Internet sites and users — currently totalling around 35 million worldwide.

"Its big attraction is that it can be committed anonymously and far from the victim," Ellen said. The advent of so-called digital cash — or electronic transfers by customers — would devastate anti-money laundering systems banks now had in place.

In a general declaration, which mainly focussed on maintaining the impetus of economic globalisation, the ICC appealed to authorities around the world to cooperate in fighting cyber crime.

"Critical infrastructures on which communities depend — telecommunications, banking and finance, energy, transportation and government services — require protection through the joint commitment of the public and private sectors," it said.

Trade deals hinder crime fighting — U.N.

BEIRUT (R) — Multilateral economic accords and the diversity of jurisdictions around the world are hampering efforts to fight crime, a senior U.N. official has said.

Slawomir Redo, the U.N. Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice officer, told Reuters in an interview better law enforcement and accurate statistics would help curb crimes, especially those involving several nations.

"Borders cease to exist under numerous economic agreements, such as the European Union, and this leads to an increase in the transnational crime," Redo said.

He said trade agreements usually led to relaxed security measures, making it easier to set up illicit businesses in several countries.

"Many countries do not have sufficient laws to fight corruption and money laundering which also does not help reduce transnational crimes. There are differences in laws between countries and a crime could be described differently in two countries, which also increases the problem," he explained.

"We cannot eradicate crime but we can reduce the number of crimes by improving law enforcement and criminal justice cooperation," he added.

Redo was speaking on the sidelines of a three-day Western Asia Regional Meeting on Crime in Beirut

this week.

The meeting, which grouped delegates from 12 nations, discussed ways to prevent transnational crime and focused on extradition, economic and financial crimes, money laundering, corruption, trafficking in humans and terrorism.

Countries presented their papers in closed-door meetings.

In the Middle East, illegal immigration as well as trafficking in drugs and firearms were the main civilian crimes the U.N. body hoped to eradicate, Redo said.

"The picture is bleak as it is only now that countries are getting ready to study crime," he added.

Delegates at the meeting said the global economic slowdown and plummeting oil prices would increase unemployment, which might translate into more transnational crime.

But Redo said the lack of statistics on such crimes hampered U.N. efforts to wipe them out. Countries have their own estimates on various domestic crimes but nations rarely keep a count of transnational crimes, he said.

"No one can assess how big the problem is in a certain region or in the world," he added.

The United Nations estimates that between 1990 and 1995, organised crime syndicates dealt in drugs and arms worth \$22 billion.

IMF eyes Internet as transparency pressures rise

WASHINGTON (R) — The words "It's on the Web" have become a mantra for beleaguered officials at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as they defend themselves against charges of obsessive secrecy and opaque lending rules.

The Web site, www.imf.org, already includes detailed "letters of intent" from some of the countries borrowing money from the IMF and reports about the strengths and weaknesses of more than half the IMF's 182-member states.

But that trickle of information may become a flood if the IMF board approves a string of demands from the U.S. Congress.

Congress' demands, toned down considerably from initial documents, ask the IMF to release key documents and minutes of its three-weekly board meetings, albeit with a 90-day delay.

The IMF must push borrowing countries to liberalise trade in goods and services and fight against crony capitalism.

"My broad instinct is that it will have some effect in pushing the fund to display and publish more information, as well as reinforcing stuff that they are already doing," said William Cline of the Institute for International Finance.

"But it's unlikely that it's going to be a real roadblock for the fund. It's not a radical or unacceptable change by any stretch of the imagination," he added.

Even before the tough negotiations with anti-IMF forces in Congress, the U.S. administration was lobbying for change at the IMF, to the chagrin of countries which said information provided to the fund should be kept secret.

In the last 12 months or so, borrowers have been encouraged to publish details of reform programmes underpinning their loans, complete with timetables of how they will open markets — something already mandated in the IMF articles of agreement — reform fragile banking systems or scrap costly subsidies.

India plans to trace 'vanishing' companies

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Indian government is trying to track down more than 1,000 private companies which "vanished" after issuing shares on the stock market, a report has said.

The Indian Express newspaper said that of the 3,872 companies which listed on the market between 1992-96, about half are no longer traded.

During the four-year period more than 600 companies "have changed their names and 1,000 have changed their registered offices," the newspaper said.

The previous government set up a panel to identify founders of companies who raised billions of dollars from the stock market during the period and "vanished" without a trace, very often without setting up the industries they raised funds for.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said last month that such "unscrupulous investors" had destroyed investor confidence and that punishing them would "restore faith in the market."

More than 4,000 issues hit the market during the four-year period to net 440 billion rupees (\$11 billion).

In the "boom" fiscal year ending March 1995, 130 billion rupees was raised.

The newspaper was pessimistic on the government's chances of bringing the "vanishing" companies to book.

"Whether any concrete action will be taken, of course, is a matter of intense speculation. The stock market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India, has consistently been at loggerheads with data gathering agencies," it said.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19)

Your partner is trying to entice you into wasting another day. This could actually be good for you. You don't have to sit there and do nothing. You could get involved in a sports activity. With the amount of energy

you have to burn right now, you could win the marathon. TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It looks like there's a lot of paperwork and details to be handled. Usually, you're not much good at this sort of thing, but today it'll be a little easier. Scoop up what you need to have done, give it to somebody who's really good at it, and voila — you'll have maximised the conditions in effect!

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Conditions are bringing out everyone's wild side. Don't do anything you'll be embarrassed about later, however. At least not in public. There are ways you can set this up so it works out well for everyone concerned: a person of your intellectual stature should certainly be able to figure out how to accomplish that.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Your home is the centre of activity again, and it looks like you've been fixing it up so it's even more beautiful than usual. As a Cancer, you're concerned about whom you're seen with. But while the moon is transiting Libra, you can relax a little and stop worrying what people will think. That's fun!

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You might want to start the day by catching up on your reading, and not just the Sunday paper. Pick up a magazine or book you've been intending to get to. The conditions are right. You'll notice that the material flows effortlessly from the printed page of your mind.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Money is a major theme today, but it doesn't have to be a burden. You're probably having a good time shopping at a garage sale or other places where you can make your dollars stretch. Even if you don't really have to scrimp, you'll find it fun, and you may also find a few precious treasures in the bargain.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You may still have a couple of nagging doubts. In order to take them out of the subconscious and put them where you can deal with them,

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

try writing them down. You'll find them a lot easier to manage. Some might even be funny! They're certainly not as scary as you thought they were, are they?

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Somebody is looking over your shoulder

today, and it could be your conscience, your own little Jimmy Cricket, whispering in your ear. It's your own higher self telling you what to do. This doesn't have to be a nerve-wracking experience. It could even be fun, once you stop resisting. SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're on a roll again today. You're looking good, and you're immensely popular. You might even be a little embarrassed. You might have to fend off some of the advances you're getting. It's just more than you can handle. Your friends and everybody will have a better time. There's plenty of love to go around.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A gathering with friends should be enjoyable today, and educational, too. You'll be learning, but you'll also be teaching. Again, watch out for a person who doesn't seem to know what he or she is doing. If that person is in the driver's seat, you'll have to offer assistance. A good navigator is definitely going to be required.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're learning quickly, and it looks good on you. You may still be a little unsure of yourself, but that's OK. Nobody else notices, especially today. You're able to go farther than you've ever gone before, and that's because you've been willing to take risks. Go ahead and try it again, with proper safety precautions in effect, of course.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You're changing the way you see yourself, and you're changing the way others see you as well. You're accepting more responsibility and a little more authority, too. You may feel like you're on shaky ground, but the structure you've already built will support you. Relax and trust it, and yourself.

Birth Stone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

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Graf ousts Hingis

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Steffi Graf continued her comeback with an upset victory over second seed and defending champion Martina Hingis on Friday in the quarter-finals of the \$450,000 Advanta Championships indoor tennis event.

Graf, rebounding from a wrist injury, extended her winning streak to eight matches and has won six of seven meetings with Hingis overall. She won the first set easily 6-2 before Hingis battled back to take the second 6-4.

In the third set, Graf displayed the dominance that made her the world's number one player for much of the last decade, running Hingis between the baseline and firing several aces to sweep the set 6-0.

Graf's last victory over Hingis came nearly two years ago at the Chase Championships final in 1996, when the two players participated in a grueling five-set war. Four months after losing to Graf, Hingis displaced her for the No. 1 ranking and held it for 80 weeks before American Lindsay Davenport seized the top spot on October 11.

Hingis and Graf will have a chance to meet again in next week's Chase Championships in New York. Graf earned the 16th and final spot after American Venus Williams withdrew on Thursday with a knee injury.



Steffi Graf returns a backhand shot during a quarterfinal match against Martina Hingis at the Advanta Tennis Championships in Villanova, Pennsylvania. Graf defeated Hingis 6-2 4-6 6-0, and advanced to the semifinals, where she will play Natalie Tauziat (Reuters photo)

The 29-year-old Graf has battled through a series of injuries this year, but won her 105th singles title and second of the year last week in her native Germany. She had wrist surgery after losing in the fourth round of the U.S. Open.

The top-seeded Davenport, last year's runner-up, earned a spot in the semifinals by rallying for a 5-7 6-3 6-3 victory over

Amy Frazier.

The 22-year-old Davenport will battle another American, fifth seed Monica Seles, for a berth in Sunday's final.

Seles, the 1991 champion, needed just 40 minutes to crush Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 6-0 6-1. Davenport has won a WTA Tour-leading six titles this year, including a victory over

Hingis in the U.S. Open final to win her first Grand Slam singles title.

Entering this week, she led the Swiss teenager by a modest 266 points in the rankings.

Sixth seed Nathalie Tauziat of France will meet Graf in the semifinals. Tauziat, this year's Wimbledon runner-up, got past South Africa's Amanda Coetzer 6-3 4-6 6-4.

Delegates meet to plan 7th All Africa Games

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Sporting delegates from 49 African countries gathered here on Saturday for a two-day meeting to fine-tune plans for the staging of the 7th All Africa Games in South Africa next September.

The meeting took the form of a joint sitting of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) — the sports wing of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) — and its two member bodies, the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) and the Association of Africa Sports Confederation (AASC).

SCSA secretary general Awoture Eleyae and ANOCA president Jean Claude Ganga both experienced problems on their arrival at Johannesburg airport this week because they were travelling on OAU passports, South African Sport Minister Steve Tshwete told AFP.

After the intervention of senior government officials, however, the two administrators were allowed into the country.

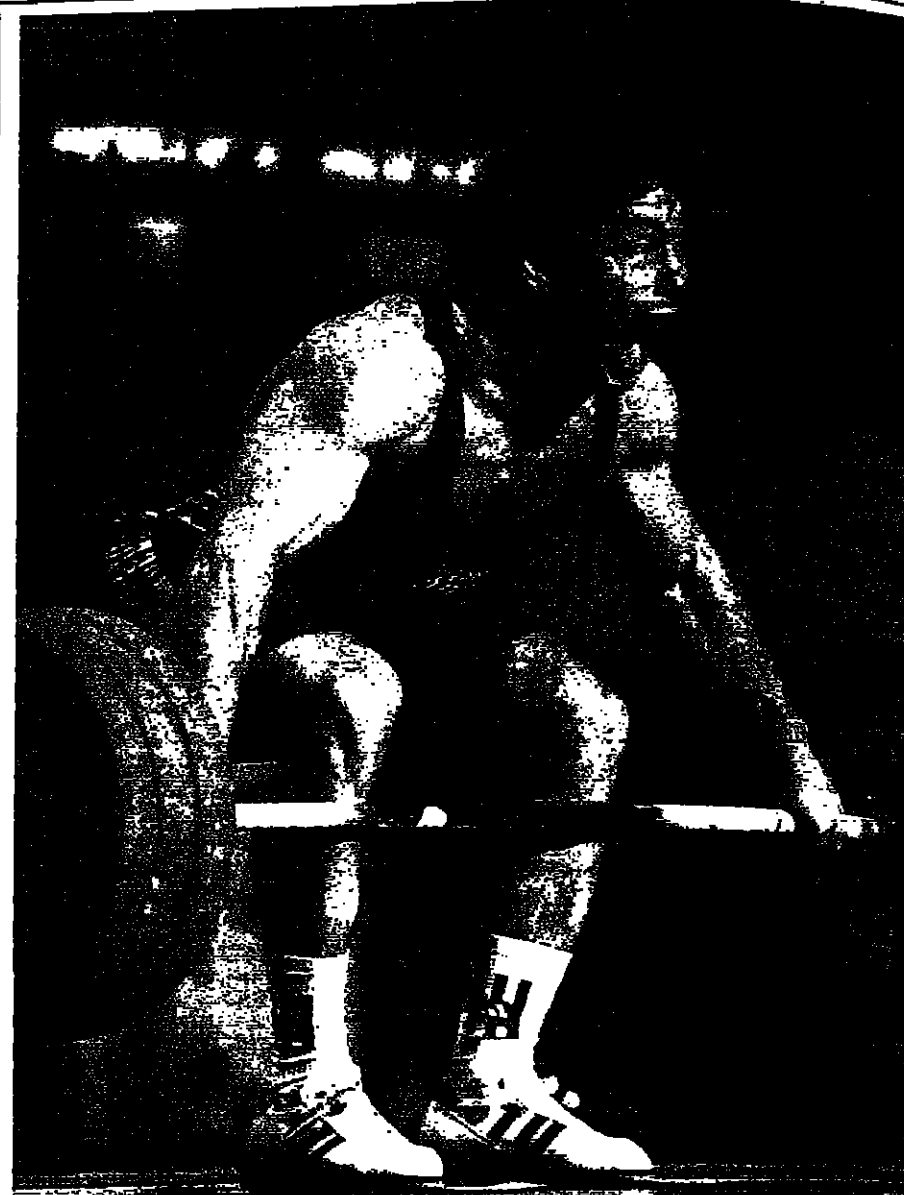
Opening the meeting Saturday, Tshwete said the presence of the African delegates in South Africa "proves we have made a departure from apartheid South Africa."

"We get the sense that South Africa has been integrated into the continent to which it belongs," he added.

Eleyae told delegates the meeting was a follow-up to a similar meeting held in Johannesburg in September last year and aimed to "consolidate the gains we have made so far and evaluate and implement" earlier decisions.

Delegates were later to make on-site inspections of venues around Johannesburg where most of the events will be held.

All Africa Games chairman Mthobisi Tyamzashe told a press conference earlier this week the Games will be a "modest" affair in a bid to prevent the chaos which marked the last meeting, in Harare in 1995.



Bulgaria's Guergui Gardev takes the gold medal in the men's 85kg category snatch at the Weightlifting World Championships in Lahti (AP photo)

Kafelnikov advances to Kremlin Cup final

MOSCOW (AFP) — Second-seeded local favourite Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Croatian Goran Ivanisevic barely broke sweat as they reached the final of the Kremlin Cup ATP event here on Saturday.

Kafelnikov was leading his semi-final, 6-1, 2-0 when Switzerland's Marc Rosset was forced to retire with a groin injury while Ivanisevic, the third seed, saw off France's Arnaud Clement in straight sets.

Rosset said he had retired because he had had enough of being a "target" for his opponent, adding he had first felt a pain in his groin during morning practice but had thought he would be able to complete the match.

Croatian Ivanisevic saw off Clement 7-5, 6-2 in 66 minutes but ended dissatisfied with his showing.

"If I played this way against Kafelnikov I will definitely lose the match," he continued.

He said his shoulder injury prevented him from playing in his normal style in the tournament, but added he hoped to be at full strength in Sunday's final.



Yevgeny Kafelnikov

Profiles of Chase Championships contenders

NEW YORK (R) — Brief profiles of leading contenders in the 16-player, season-ending Chase Championships, which begins on Monday at Madison Square Garden (1998 match records through Friday's quarterfinals in Philadelphia):

• **Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)**
Age: 22
Ranking: 1
Seeding: 1
1998 singles record: 65-13
1998 titles won: 6 (including U.S. Open)
Previous championships appearances: 4 (1997, '96, '95, '94)
Best championships result: runner-up 1994

• **Martina Hingis (Switzerland)**
Age: 18
Ranking: 2
Seeding: 2
1998 singles record: 63-13
1998 titles won: 4 (including Australian Open)
Previous championships appearances: 2 (1997, '96)
Best championships result: runner-up 1996

• **Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)**
Age: 30
Ranking: 3
Seeding: 3
1998 singles record: 51-15
1998 titles won: 4 (including Wimbledon)
Previous championships appearances: 9 (1997, '96, '95, '94, '93, '92, '91, '90, '89)
Best championships result: winner 1997

• **Steffi Graf (Germany)**
Age: 29
Ranking: 17
Seeding: unseeded
1998 singles record: 29-8



Mary Pierce

1998 titles won: 2
Previous championships appearances: 12 (1996, '95, '94, '93, '92, '91, '90, '89, '88, '87, '86 March, '86 November)
Best championships result: winner 1996, 1995, 1993, 1989, 1987

• **Monica Seles (U.S.)**
Age: 24
Ranking: 6
Seeding: 5
1998 singles record: 44-11
1998 titles won: 2 (including French Open)
Previous championships appearances: 9 (1997, '96, '95, '94, '93, '92, '91, '90, '89)
Best championships result: runner-up 1993

• **Mary Pierce (France)**
Age: 23

result: winner 1992, 1991, 1990

• **Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)**
Age: 26
Ranking: 4
Seeding: 4
1998 singles record: 48-19
1998 titles won: 2 (including French Open)
Previous championships appearances: 9 (1997, '96, '95, '94, '93, '92, '91, '90, '89)
Best championships result: runner-up 1993

• **Patty Schnyder (Switzerland)**
Age: 19
Ranking: 10
Seeding: unseeded
1998 singles record: 55-21
1998 titles won: 5
Previous championships appearances: 0

• **Mary Pierce (France)**
Age: 23

Liverpool's McManaman headed for Real Madrid

MADRID (AFP) — Liverpool and England winger Steve McManaman is set to sign a five-year deal with European champions Real Madrid, Spanish sports daily As reported on Saturday.

McManaman has been linked with Real for several weeks and can move at the end of the season on a free transfer under the Bosman ruling.

Under the proposed deal he will earn 350 million pesetas (\$2.33 million) a season, according to As, which added the player and Real officials had already had preliminary contract talks.

Liverpool have complained to UEFA about Real's approach for the star, on the grounds that clubs are supposed to wait until January before pursuing their interest in him.

But Real dismissed the Reds' complaint. "Liverpool cannot complain about us because it was McManaman's representatives who visited us," said Real president Lorenzo Sanz.

Barcelona were interested in signing the 26-year-old a year ago for around \$19 million but decided at the last minute to buy Brazilian Rivaldo instead.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HIRSH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q. 1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A J 7 5 ♣ A J 9 2 ♢ A 10 4
- The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1: Pass 1C Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠ A Q 4 ♣ 10 7 4 3 2 ♢ A J 7
- Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
- Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A Q 9 7 10 8 4 3 ♣ A 3 2 ♢ A K 6
- Partner opens the bidding with one club. What do you respond?
- Q. 4 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A 9 7 6 4 ♣ A Q 8 5 ♢ A K J 7 6
- The bidding has proceeded: NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST
1A 10 10 10 10
What do you bid now?
- South you hold:
- ♠ A Q J 9 7 5 4 ♣ Q 2 7 2 ♢ A 2
- Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you bid now?
- Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A A E 5 3 ♣ Q 10 7 4 ♢ 10 A K Q 7 4
- The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1A 10 10 10 10
What do you bid now?
- Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠ A 9 7 6 4 ♣ A Q 8 5 ♢ A K J 7 6
- The bidding has proceeded: NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST
1A 10 10 10 10
What do you bid now?

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Husham Yanes RE
	Lawrence Fishburne & Sam Neill... in	Julia Roberts & Richard Gere... in	Comedian Mohammad Huneidi... in	CONCORD '1'	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria	Watch out for the new play
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Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

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LOCAL SPORTS
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Compiled by

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LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



Paralympics invitations sent out

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, head of the 1st Arab Paralympic Games Organising Committee, Saturday sent out invitations to Arab countries to participate in the event which will follow next summer's Aug. 15-31 Pan-Arab Games. The Paralympics will include basketball, athletics, weightlifting and table tennis for the physically handicapped; athletics for the blind; football for the deaf and athletics for the mentally handicapped. The official logo of the paralympics includes Jordan's national bird, symbols that represent the four handicaps and "No. 1" as an indication of the First Arab Paralympic Games.

Fawwaz to attend OCA meeting

AMMAN — Jordan Olympic Committee Vice President Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz has received an invitation from Olympic Council of Asia President Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahd to attend the meetings of the Olympic Council's Sports and Development Committee. The meetings will take place before the Asian Games which will be held in Bangkok Dec. 6-20.

Consortium asks for compensation

AMMAN — A meeting will be held soon between the Jordan Football Association (JFA) and the consortium which was in charge of marketing the 1998 football championships to discuss the JFA's latest decision to cancel the Premier League Championship. The consortium is asking the JFA to make up for financial losses caused by the cancellation. The contract signed between the two sides stipulates that an amount equal to last year's championship revenue estimated at JD240,000 be paid in the event of cancellation of a tournament.

Hroub elected Jazireh Chairman

AMMAN — The Chairman of the Al Arab Al Yawm Arabic daily, Riad Hroub, won the chairmanship of Al Jazireh Club unopposed. Nominees for the board of directors are: Salim Shahin, Asad Habib, Samir Ukour, Rafiq Jawdat, Firas Qadi, Isam Tali, Hakam Jarrar, Ali Masri, Walid Hashem, Osama Far, Mohammad Smadi and Amer Zmaily.

Basketball teams to start training

AMMAN — Jordan Basketball Federation Chairman Mudar Majdoub has called Al Jazireh Club players: Nasser Alawneh and Musa Bashir, to join the national team. Majdoub said he hoped that all obstacles would be removed to enable the rest of the club's suspended players to join the team. The JBF meanwhile announced that a Yugoslav coach would be chosen to train the men's national team. Meanwhile, the women's national team will soon start practice after Imad Al Saeed was appointed as coach. The JBF will Monday issue the schedule for the second division championship.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib

Stockholm Open

Rusedski subdued over his Hanover chances after defeat

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — The race for Hanover went down to the wire as Britain's Greg Rusedski lost his chance to clinch the final place at the season finale, losing 7-5, 7-6 (9/7) to Thomas Johansson on Saturday in the semi-finals of the \$825,000 Stockholm Open.

With Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the other contender for the eighth and final spot in the season wrap-up playing in the Kremlin Cup final on Sunday in Moscow, it's all down to that match to determine Rusedski's fate.

If Goran Ivanisevic beats Kafelnikov, Rusedski goes through to the eight-man final at Hanover, Germany 24-29 November. A Kafelnikov victory settles the decision in the Russian's favour.

However, a subdued Rusedski didn't hold out much hope for the Croat helping him to make the Hanover showpiece.

"I'm disappointed. It won't feel great sitting at Hanover as an alternate. I cannot see Kafelnikov losing the final in

Moscow," the 25-year-old said.

"It's too bad, I came so close and then fell short," he added.

Rusedski saved a set point in the second set tiebreaker against seventh seed Johansson the overwhelming crowd-pleaser on his home court.

The big-hitting Briton, who could have clinched a Hanover spot had he won, then saved a match point when the nervous Johansson volleyed long.

But the 23-year-old Swede would not be denied, firing over his 12th ace for a second match-winning chance and clinching victory with a winning volley.

Rusedski's loss followed only a few hours after compatriot Tim Henman also went down to defeat, beaten 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 by American Todd Martin.

Henman, however, clinched the seventh place at Hanover through his quarter-final win on Friday night over Swede Magnus Gustafsson.

Rusedski dropped serve to

start poorly in the third game of the must-win match as Johansson played well in front of a home crowd to lead 2-1.

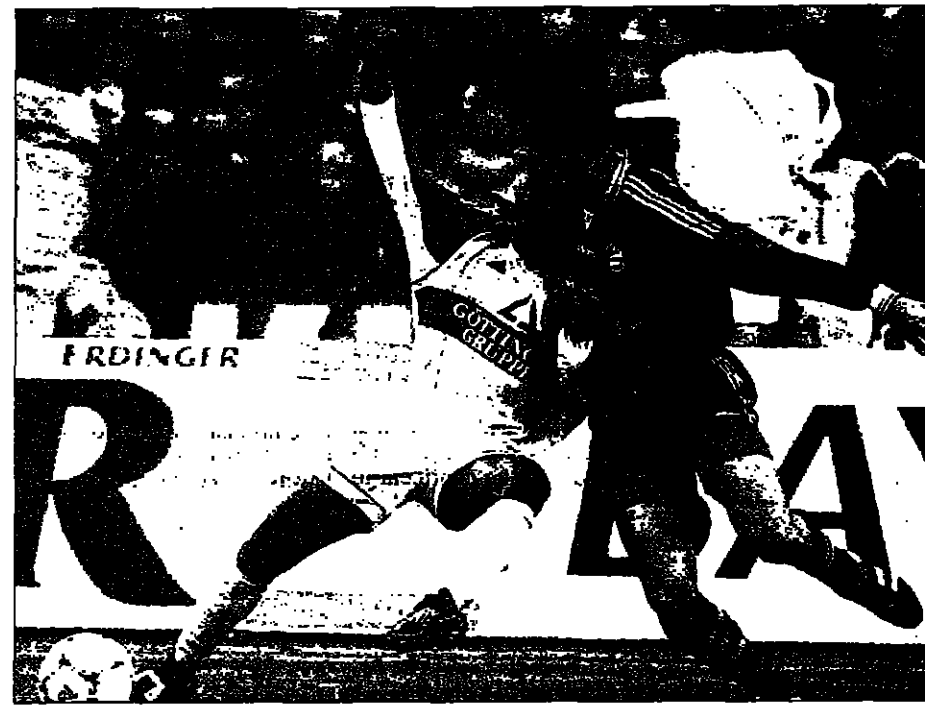
The fourth-seeded Briton got back into his rhythm and broke back in the tenth game.

The frustrated Johansson, who had already suffered a net-cord bounce to give Rusedski the break chance, slammed his racket to the court as the Briton levelled at 5-5.

The Swede took a 6-5 lead when Rusedski weakly shovelled a volley into the net to lose serve again. The home favourite wasted no time in winning the set when Rusedski put a backhand into the net.

The Canadian born naturalised Briton was slightly hampered by the lower back muscle which he pulled on the way to his quarter-final win over Daniel Nestor of Canada on Friday.

"I knew it would be a tough match, I couldn't move well on my right side. Johansson got lucky in the tiebreaker," Rusedski said.



Jonathan Akpoborie (L) of VfB Stuttgart fights for control of the ball against Markus Babel of FC Bayern Munich during the first minutes of their first division soccer match. Bayern won 2-0 (Reuters photo)



Al Wihdat

Wihdat leave for Arab Clubs Championship

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's 1997 soccer champions Al Wihdat leave for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Sunday to take part in the 14th Arab Clubs Championship which will be held Nov. 19-Dec. 2 with nine teams taking part.

Jordan's titleholders were drawn in Group 1 alongside hosts Al Ittihad, UAE's Al Wasl and Libya's Al Tahadi.

Group 2 includes Tunisia's Al Afriqi, Saudi Arabia's Al Shabab, Al Rifa' Al Gharbi of Bahrain, Widad Tilman of Algeria and Syria's Tishreen.

Since the top two teams of each group will qualify to the second round, Al Wihdat's officials who attended the draw described their team's chances of moving alongside title-favorites Al Ittihad as "quite good."

Al Wihdat will apply to host the 15th championship finals in Amman

Schedule of matches

Nov. 19	Ittihad-Wasl
Nov. 20	Widad-Tishreen
	Afriqi-Rifa'
Nov. 21	Wihdat-Tahadi
Nov. 22	Tishreen-Rifa'
	Widad-Shabab
Nov. 23	Wihdat-Ittihad
	Wasl-Tahadi
Nov. 24	Rifa'-Shabab
	Tishreen-Afriqi
Nov. 26	Shabab-Afriqi
Nov. 27	Rifa'-Widad
Nov. 28	Ittihad-Tahadi
Nov. 28	Wihdat-Wasl
Nov. 30	Afriqi-Widad
	Shabab-Tishreen
Dec. 2	1st Group 1-2nd Group 2
	1st Group 2-2nd Group 1
	Final match

when the Arab Football Federation secretariat holds its meetings on the sidelines of the event. Al Wihdat's delegation is headed by chairman Fahd Bayyari, officials Mohammad Tayyem and Khalid Salim, coaches Anwar Jassam, and Nader Za'tar. Players Naser Ghandour, Yousef Ammouri, Isam Mahmoud, Faisal

Ibrahim, Abdullah Abu Zame', Haitham Samrein, Adnan Tawil, Sufyan Abdullah, Ra'fat Ali, Ali Juma', Hisham Abdul Mune'm, Jamal Mahmoud, Mahmoud Shilbay'e, Walid Baqaen, Munir Abu Hantash, Ra'fat Al Fahoum, Murad Hassan, Samer Bahlouz, Marwan Shamali.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Ronaldo to miss Sampdoria clash

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan's Ronaldo will sit out Sunday's Serie A clash with Sampdoria after picking up a knee injury in last week's derby draw against AC Milan. The Brazilian star barely trained during the week and, although several tests have failed to show a specific problem, Inter are taking no chances. "He just has a bruised knee, that's why he couldn't follow the training schedule," said Inter doctor Piero Volpi.

Injured Elway to sit out game

DENVER (AFP) — The unbeaten Denver Broncos will have to make a run at 10-0 without star quarterback John Elway. Elway's sore rib muscles are still bothering him so he will sit out Monday night's AFC West battle at Kansas City. "It's not comfortable and this is not something I'm going to rush," Elway said of the rib injury. "I rushed the hamstring injury and it cost me some games." Elway suffered the injury during pre-game warmups last Sunday, but backup Bobby Brister passed for 229 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Broncos to a 27-10 win over San Diego. Elway attempted to play after sitting out the first series, but completed just 1-of-3 passes for 12 yards and left the game for good after being sacked by Chargers linebacker Junior Seau.

Colts star has brain surgery

INDIANAPOLIS (AFP) — Indianapolis Colts fullback Craig Heyward was in serious but stable condition Friday after more than 12 hours of surgery to remove a tumor from the base of his skull. Neurosurgeon Troy Payner, a vascular and skull base specialist with the Indianapolis Neurosurgical Group, said that nearly all of the tumor was removed in surgery that began around 8:00 Thursday morning and finished after 8 p.m. "We extracted as much as could safely be removed," Payner said Friday, adding it was impossible to remove all of the tumor because it was entwined with vital brain structures. The tumor was found after Heyward experienced blurred vision.

Del Piero needs knee surgery

TURIN (AFP) — Italian international Alessandro Del Piero is set to undergo surgery after damaging the cruciate ligaments in his left knee, according to Italian news agency ANSA on Friday. The Juventus striker had a consultation at a hospital in Lyon, France, on Friday which confirmed the diagnosis of the Turin club's doctors. Del Piero, who turned 24 on Monday, was injured after colliding with Udinese defender Marco Zanchi at the end of Sunday's 2-2 draw. Earlier reports suggested he would not need an

operation. Doctor Pierre Chambat said he would wait at least two weeks before operating to allow the knee swelling to go down. Chambat confirmed Del Piero, a key member of the Italian side at the World Cup, would be out for five to six months and, at best, would be available for the last three Italian league games this season.

Polish club gets one-year ban

WARSAW (AFP) — Polish club Wisla Krakow was banned from Europe on Friday following a knife-throwing incident which ended with Parma's Dino Baggio needing five stitches in a head wound. European football's governing body UEFA said it would exclude Krakow next time it qualified for any of the European competitions. The ban would last for a single season but would remain in place for the next five years. The Polish first division side initially questioned Baggio's version of events but television replays clearly showed a knife thrown from the crowd hitting him during their second round, first leg UEFA Cup match in Krakow on October 20. Krakow drew the game in which Baggio was injured 1-1 but Parma won 2-1 in Italy to earn a place in the third round. Polish federation general secretary Michal Listkiewicz, announcing the UEFA ban, said the knife could have killed Baggio. Krakow police reportedly arrested a 19-year-old man on Friday for the attack. He could face a prison term of between three months and five years. Wisla Krakow, who sent a letter of apology to Parma, had put up a 1,450-dollar reward for information leading to an arrest.

Borussia end nightmare run

BONN (AFP) — Bottom club Borussia Monchengladbach bounced back from two disastrous defeats and the sacking of their coach to draw 1-1 at Hansa Rostock in the German league on Friday. The five-times former Bundesliga champions, who lost 8-2 at home to Leverkusen and 7-1 at Wolfsburg in their last two games, took the lead through Karlheinz Pfipsen after 35 minutes. But Pole Slawomir Majak levelled the match in the 51st. Borussia, with only one win in 11 games, called in former German international Rainer Bonhof as coach last week after sacking Friedel Rausch. In Friday's other game, Werder Bremen, just one place above Borussia at the foot of the table, lost 1-0 at home Kaiserslautern. The match-winner was Egyptian defender Hany Ramzy, scoring with 15 minutes to go, putting Kaiserslautern into second spot behind Bayern Munich.

Dettori defends riding of beaten Swain

LONDON (R) — Frankie Dettori has broken his silence in Britain over his riding of Swain in last week's Breeders' Cup Classic which critics say cost him victory in the world's richest ever race worth \$5.12 million.

Dettori finished third to Awesome Again and Silver Charm after drifting across the track in the closing stages at Churchill Downs.

The jockey felt the horse had "spooked" by the TV lights but he told Channel Four's The Morning Line on Saturday: "It's common knowledge that if you get near Silver Charm he will outbottle you."

"As I left the weighing room the top riders told me to go wide of Silver Charm. I deliberately made my challenge four horses off Silver Charm."

Dettori, renowned for his seven winners in a day at Ascot two years ago, was riding Swain for the Godolphin group of Sheikh Mohammed.

The pair have enjoyed many big race successes but Godolphin's trainer Saeed bin Suroor was moved to comment after Swain's defeat: "Frankie is a big name and he's our jockey. At the same time I would like to see him ride better than this."

Rios World No. 1 hopes take a dive

SANTIAGO (R) — Hometown favourite and top seed Marcelo Rios squandered a chance to become the World's No. 1 player when unseeded Juan Antonio Marin of Costa Rica upset him in the quarter-finals of Chile's \$315,000 Chevrolet Cup claycourt tennis event on Friday.

Marin battled to a 6-4 6-7 (5-7) 7-6 (7-5) victory over the Chilean World No. 2, who had to win this tournament to vault past American Pete Sampras and enter the upcoming ATP Tour World Championships at Hannover, Germany, with the top spot in the world rankings.

Sampras lost in the first round this week in Stockholm, and Rios trailed him by 605 points in the latest rankings. Sampras is now assured of holding the world's top ranking with 3,703 points to Rios's 3,670.

With the victory, Marin reached his third ATP Tour semifinal of the year, but not before Rios mounted a furious second-set comeback in their first-ever meeting.

Trailing 6-4, 4-0, Rios rallied to win six of the next eight games, forcing a tiebreaker, which he won 7-5 to force a third set. But Marin was able to regain his composure and take a third-set tiebreaker to set up a semifinal matchup with fifth-seeded Francisco Claver of Spain.

Claver earned a semifinal berth by posting a 6-4 6-4 victory over Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador.

Second seed Felix Mantilla of Spain avenged a loss to American Jim Courier last week in Bogota by outlasting the former World No. 1 3-6 6-3 7-6 (8-6).

Mantilla — who has won seven career titles, all on



Felix Mantilla

clay — was to meet Moroccan Younes El Aynaoui in Saturday's semifinals.

El Aynaoui, who has battled through two injury-plagued seasons, was leading sixth seed Mariano Puerta of Argentina 6-2 1-0 when Puerta retired with a left wrist injury.

The 22-year-old Rios has never won this event in his native city, losing in the finals the previous three years.

He needed to win this

event last year to clinch a berth in the season-ending event in Hannover but was stunned by Spain's Julian Alonso in the final, 6-2 6-1.

Rios has won seven titles this year and has had two brief stints atop the rankings. However, he has battled injuries over the past month that forced him to pull out of tournaments in Lyon and Stuttgart. Last week, Rios lost to Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the quarter-finals of the Paris Open.

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Kurds protest in Rome over arrest of PKK leader

ROME (R) — Some 1,500 Kurds marched through Rome on Saturday to protest the arrest of Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan, while Italian politicians grappled over whether to grant Turkey's most wanted man political asylum.

Kurdish men, women and children, including many who came from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, paraded through the streets, chanting "Free Ocalan" and waving photographs of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader, arrested in Rome on Thursday.

A scuffle broke out between some of the protesters and Turkish journalists in front of Rome's military hospital, where Ocalan is believed to be held, witnesses said.

Turkey, which holds Ocalan responsible for the deaths of thousands in the 14-year fight for Kurdish independence, has lodged a request with Italian authorities for his extradition.

But Ocalan on Saturday filed a request for political asylum with Italy's interior ministry, a ministry spokesman told Reuters. He said an internal commission would examine whether to accept the request, but that "it would be a long procedure."

Italian Justice Minister Oliviero Diliberto, meanwhile, has 10 days to decide whether to confirm Ocalan's arrest. If he does, he then has to decide on Turkey's extradition request.

Italy abolished the death penalty after World War II and the constitution forbids extradition to countries where capital punishment is still in force — such as Turkey. But a suspect could feasibly be extradited if the country seeking the extradition promised not to condemn that suspect to death.

Diliberto, a member of the Italian Communist Party, told reporters he had not yet looked at Turkey's request.

But pressure mounted on him on Saturday not to grant the extradition, with many senior figures in Italy's new centre-left government — which includes Marxist ministers for the first time in 50 years — saying Italy should give Ocalan asylum.

Franco Corleone, justice ministry undersecretary, said it was unlikely Italy could extradite Ocalan to Turkey with an asylum request pending.

However, the right to asy-

lum could conflict with Italy's obligations to Germany, where Ocalan is also wanted, because of accords between European states, he said in an interview with Milan daily Corriere della Sera. "The problem is Germany... with whom we have certain relations to maintain," he said.

Germany issued an arrest warrant against Ocalan in 1990 for murder, but the federal prosecutors office has not yet decided whether to request extradition, a spokeswoman said on Friday.

Armando Cossutta, leader of the Italian Communists, came out in support of Ocalan, saying Italy had a duty to grant him political asylum. "The Italian government, a democratic one, has to guarantee safety and political asylum," Cossutta said.

"Ocalan is a courageous fighter who has always battled for his people — people who are ferociously oppressed by authoritarian nations," he added.

Russo Spina, a member of the Greens party, also part of the government, told a news conference that Ocalan had come to Rome intending to turn himself in so he could request asylum.

The PKK has also urged Italy not to extradite Ocalan, threatening retaliation against Turkey and what it called Ankara's supporters. The threats prompted stepped up security across Turkey on Saturday.

Ocalan, believed to be around 50, was detained under the authorisation of an Interpol arrest warrant after flying from Moscow on a false passport, police said. He is expected to appear before a Rome court on Thursday.

Described as the main architect of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, Ocalan fled abroad in 1980 after the army staged a coup and had lived in obscure exile ever since.

Ocalan, also known as "Apo," has spearheaded a campaign for autonomy in southeast Turkey in which more than 29,000 people have been killed.

Born into a poor peasant family in the southeastern village of Ormerly, he founded the PKK in 1978 as an extreme-left nationalist faction and 14 years ago launched a war against Turkey for the establishment of an independent state of Kurdistan along Marxist lines.



Kurdish women on Saturday chant slogans outside Rome's Celio military hospital, where their guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan is believed to be held after his arrest November 12 at Fiumicino airport. Some 1,500 Kurdish men, women and children who have arrived from all over Italy, Germany, Austria and Switzerland marched through the streets of Rome to protest and to urge Italy not to hand Ocalan over to Turkish authorities (Reuters photo)

Turkey braces for Kurd backlash after arrest

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's police and army stepped up security nationwide on Saturday to prevent revenge attacks threatened by Kurdish rebels following the arrest of their leader in Italy.

A senior security official said the measures were taken after the arrest in Rome of Turkey's most wanted guerrilla, Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan, who has spearheaded a 14-year fight for Kurdish independence.

Turkey has requested Ocalan's extradition but the PKK has urged Italy not to hand him over, threatening retaliation against Turkey and what it called Ankara's supporters.

"Security precautions have been tightened, especially in the main cities, against the possibility of dramatic terrorist attacks," the Turkish security official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

Police in the southeastern capital of Diyarbakir said

anti-terror police units stepped up identity checks and body searches on routes into cities and towns.

Army and police units increased patrols in the region, where the PKK has been seeking Kurdish self-rule.

Some 20 suspects were arrested as a result of checks in Diyarbakir, police added.

Ocalan was arrested on Thursday evening at Rome's Fiumicino airport, where he arrived on a false passport, in what was believed to have been a coordinated operation by European secret services.

The rebels staged two suicide bombings in 1996 which killed six policemen and a bystander. Last month a Kurdish gunman, an apparent PKK sympathiser, hijacked a plane during state festivities. He was shot dead and 40 hostages were freed.

Turkish newspapers hailed the arrest of the guerrilla leader, also known as Apo, as a victory and declared it a major coup against his rebel

Ocalan to get invitation from Greek deputies

ATHENS (R) — A Greek socialist deputy headed for Rome on Saturday to deliver an invitation to visit Athens to Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), Greek newspapers reported.

Papers said Costas Mandouvas, a backbencher with the ruling socialist party, wanted to give Ocalan the invitation signed by 109 Greek parliamentarians, more than a third of the country's deputies.

Separately, Greece's Deputy Speaker Panayiotis Sgouridis, a signatory to the invitation, was quoted in the daily Eleftherotypia as calling for Ocalan to be given political asylum as "vindication for the rivers of blood and generations of sacrifices by the Kurdish nation."

The invitation to Athens, drawn up on Nov. 5, was a renewal of an earlier standing invitation issued by a larger group of Greek deputies 18 months ago, signatories said.

Turkey, Greece's long-time rival over territory in the Aegean and the divided island of Cyprus, has long accused Greece of sheltering and supporting Kurdish separatists, a charge which Athens vehemently denies.

capturing a senior PKK commander in Iraq this year and clinching a deal with Damascus last month banning the rebels from Syrian bases.

Clinton settles Paula Jones sexual harassment suit

WASHINGTON (R) — Lawyers for U.S. President Bill Clinton and Paula Jones settled her sexual harassment lawsuit on Friday with an agreement that he pay her \$850,000, legal sources said.

The end of the lawsuit, which has been a thorn in Clinton's side for more than four years, removed yet another problem for the president as he seeks to avoid impeachment over the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal.

Legal sources familiar with the settlement said Clinton would pay Jones \$850,000 but would admit no wrongdoing in her charge that Clinton, as governor of Arkansas in 1991, dropped his pants and asked for oral sex

when she was a low-level state employee.

But it was unclear how much money Jones would actually end up keeping since her lawyers claim she owes them hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees.

It was equally unclear whether Jones would get \$1 million put up by New York real estate developer Abe Hirschfeld. Two weeks ago he put the money in an escrow account and said Jones could have it upon reaching a settlement with Clinton.

It was Jones' suit that triggered the Lewinsky matter that rocked Clinton's presidency for most of 1998.

In sworn testimony to

Jones' lawyers last January, Clinton denied having sexual relations with Lewinsky. He waited seven months before admitting his denial was based on a narrow definition of sex and that he had a relationship with her that was "wrong."

Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's investigation of the Lewinsky affair revealed that Clinton accepted oral sex from Lewinsky on a number of occasions and that he tried to keep it secret.

Whether Clinton lied under oath and attempted to cover up the affair are at the heart of the House Judiciary Committee's inquiry into whether Clinton should be impeached.

In recent weeks the two sides have gradually

moved closer to each other on how much money Clinton would pay.

Clinton's private lawyer Robert Bennett had offered \$700,000 while Jones' attorneys wanted \$950,000.

Since coming forward with her allegations in 1994, Jones has had two teams of lawyers, and both claim they have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on the case.

Her first team of lawyers, Joseph Cammarata and Gilbert Davis, have filed court papers seeking \$800,000 in past legal bills from Jones, who fired them last year. Her current lawyers maintain they have accumulated \$1.5 million in expenses in the last 13 months.

Next Thursday, Starr is to testify before the committee.

Many Republicans have urged Clinton to admit to committing perjury in the Jones deposition and accept punishment short of impeachment, like censure, a strong form of condemnation.

The strong performance of Democrats in Nov. 3 midterm elections has signaled to Republicans that the American people are tired of the scandal and want to see it ended swiftly.

Jones' suit was dismissed in April but the dismissal was under appeal before the settlement was reached.

In recent weeks the two sides have gradually

Turkish teenage crook in Istanbul after deportation from Germany

ISTANBUL (AFP) — A Turkish juvenile delinquent arrived in Istanbul on Saturday after Germany expelled the 14-year-old boy following a green light from the Constitutional Court.

The teenager — identified only as Mehmet for reasons of data protection but not his real name — arrived in Istanbul with his 16-year-old German girlfriend Jasmin K. on a Lufthansa flight from Munich escorted by three German policemen.

Mehmet was not accompanied by his parents and no relatives came to the airport to pick him up, Turkish police said.

After three hours of questioning by airport police and a prosecutor, Mehmet and Jasmin were driven to a halfway house for street children for the night.

Dressed in a yellow windbreaker, Mehmet looked subdued as he was led to a police car after questioning. Asked by reporters how he felt, he answered "not good."

Mehmet, a Turkish citizen born and raised in Germany, is accused of having committed around 60 crimes there, including

robbery and assault, and has been sentenced to one year in prison. Germany's Constitutional Court ruled Friday that the boy could be expelled.

Bavarian state authorities ordered the youth to be expelled several months ago, when he was 13, along with his parents in line with its get-tough policy on juvenile crime.

It said his parents are at least partly responsible for his crimes by failing to bring him up properly.

However the Bavarian state administrative court, overturning a decision by a lower court, then ruled that his parents could not be expelled.

Mehmet's parents, who have been living in Munich for some 30 years, have never been in trouble with police themselves.

The boy's case had taken on special significance in the runup to regional elections in September in Bavaria state where the state premier's ultra-conservative Christian Social Union Party ran on a strong law-and-order ticket to avoid losing votes to the far right.

Irate homeowner disrupts football match

EAST YORKSHIRE (AP) — An English woman added a new dimension to pitch invasions when she halted a soccer game by driving onto the field and refusing to move until her demands were met. Amanda MacNaughton reportedly became frustrated when the driveway of her Beverley home was blocked by a car belonging to a supporter from a neighbouring soccer club. So she took the law into her own hands. Match referee Brian Freeman said MacNaughton drove onto the field while play was in progress, parked her car in the goal mouth and refused to shift it until the guilty fan moved the vehicle.

Bobbitt in trouble with the law

CARSON CITY (AP) — John Wayne Bobbitt is back at work at a brothel — and back in trouble with the law. He was arrested Thursday on charges of theft and conspiracy in connection with more than \$140,000 in clothes taken from a store in Fallon. Bobbitt was released five hours after his arrest when his boss, who owns the Moonlight Bunny Ranch and Kitty's Guest Ranch brothels posted bail. Bobbitt was fired as a Moonlight bartender-chef in April because he couldn't keep his hands off the working girls, but he now works as a Kitty's bartender.

Sumo referee continues despite broken arm

TOKYO (R) — Despite suffering a broken arm when a 160-kg wrestler fell on him, sumo judge Inosuke Shikimori fought off the pain to officiate two matches. Shikimori, 63, was waiting at the ringside for his turn to judge Friday's top two bouts when wrestler Kaio crashed into him. Dressed in the traditional kimono worn by sumo judges, Shikimori tucked his broken arm into the robe's sleeve and went on to perform his duties. Sumo officials said this was the first incident on record of a judge being injured at the ringside, even though the hefty wrestlers are sent flying out of the ring on a daily basis.

Internet misuse lands man in jail

SINGAPORE (AP) — A Singapore man was sentenced to three months in jail for unauthorised use of the Internet under the island nation's tough new computer laws, a newspaper reported Saturday. Daud Mohammad Sani, a 29-year old former business manager, was found guilty of using a customer's Internet account without permission between May and June last year, said The Straits Times. Although he only incurred about \$24 of charges while using the account, the court handed him a stiff penalty under the recently amended Computer Misuse Act. Daud faced a maximum \$1,200 fine and two years in prison.

Reagan's grandson charged with auto theft

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A grandson of former President Reagan has pleaded innocent to auto burglary and theft charges. Cameron Michael Reagan, 20, of Sherman Oaks was charged with two counts of auto burglary and two counts of theft. Police spotted Reagan and his accomplice in Van Nuys on Tuesday, a police spokesman said. Officers detained Reagan and Lopez and found that both of them had property that had been stolen from a locked car parked nearby, he added. Both are suspected of other car burglaries in the Van Nuys area.

Austrian foreign minister says European Union doesn't need Israeli assent for peace process role

DAMASCUS (AP) — The European Union's role in the Middle East peace process does not depend on Israel's agreement, Austria's Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel said here Saturday.

"The European Union (EU) is giving more than 70 per cent of the international support to the Palestinian people, and we

want to play a political role in the peace process," Schuessel said.

Schuessel, whose country currently holds the EU's rotating presidency, was addressing a news conference after separate talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa on the third leg of a Middle Eastern tour.

Asked if Israel had agreed to an effective EU role, Schuessel said: "We are playing the role. This role does not depend on the others. It depends on our vision, on our political way and our ability to play the role."

Israel has long resisted a stronger EU role, having often criticised positions of the EU and some mem-

ber states as being pro-Palestinian.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency reported Assad as telling Schuessel that his government wants the EU to play an active role in the peace process.

Schuessel, who is accompanied by the EU's Middle East envoy Miguel Moratinos, later flew to Beirut, Lebanon. He has

already visited Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks have been stalled since early 1996. Syria insists on the unconditional return of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Israel says the plateau is essential to its security.

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